METAL GEAR 2
WHY IT'S NOT A PERFECT 10

JET SET RADIO FUTURE
Xbox's essential street skater gets a multiplayer makeover

computer and video games

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XBOX EXCLUSIVE

BUFFY
Sunnydale's killer teen gets a thorough going over

GAMECUBE & GBA

SONIC
Sega's razor-sharp hero blasts onto Nintendo's next-gen machines

JEDI KNIGHT 2
The Force? Yeah, it's *damn* strong in this one

MARIO ADVANCE 2
Must-have platformer that's a right handful

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Are you ready for some serious Drome Racing? For the challenges Dromulus is about to give you? Get ready to race along rocky canyon track, through the muddy jungle, across the vast, hot desert, or join in the city race on high-speed circuits.
You can customise your vehicle for the ever-changing racing challenges in the Drome!
3, 2, 1 – Go!

4585 Nitro Pulveriser
Capable of racing in the rocky canyon terrain.
Powered by Pull-back motor.

8470 Sammer G-Force
Designed to race on the high-speed circuits.
Powered by "Slammer".

Pull your racer back, let go – and see it take off! Each of the 6 different pull back motors makes your racers perform differently – try them all

Place your racer in front of the powerful "Slammer", hit it hard, and watch it blast away!

LEGO RACERS

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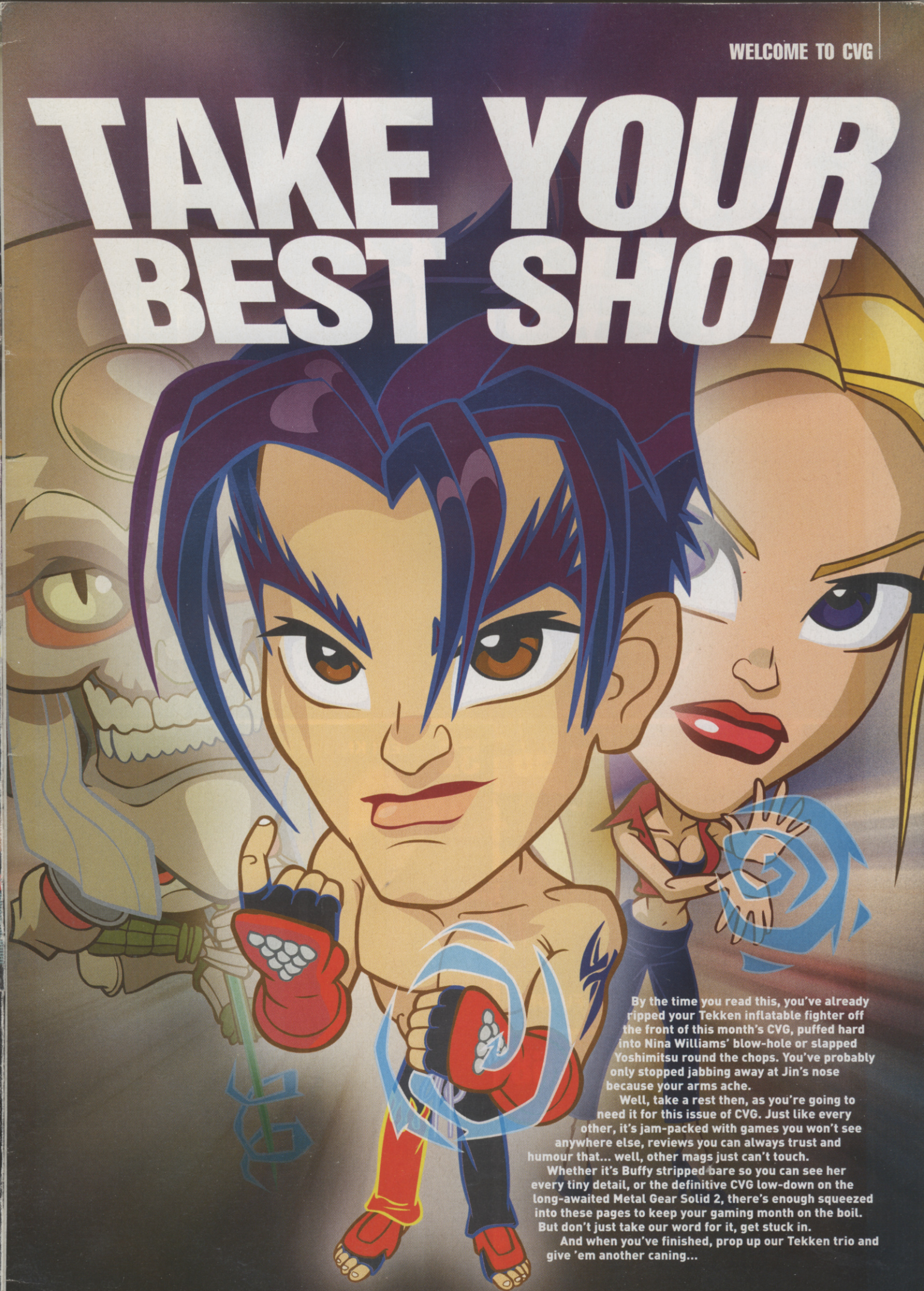
TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT



By the time you read this, you've already ripped your Tekken inflatable fighter off the front of this month's CVG, puffed hard into Nina Williams' blow-hole or slapped Yoshimitsu round the chops. You've probably only stopped jabbing away at Jin's nose because your arms ache.

Well, take a rest then, as you're going to need it for this issue of CVG. Just like every other, it's jam-packed with games you won't see anywhere else, reviews you can always trust and humour that... well, other mags just can't touch.

Whether it's Buffy stripped bare so you can see her every tiny detail, or the definitive CVG low-down on the long-awaited Metal Gear Solid 2, there's enough squeezed into these pages to keep your gaming month on the boil. But don't just take our word for it, get stuck in.

And when you've finished, prop up our Tekken trio and give 'em another caning...

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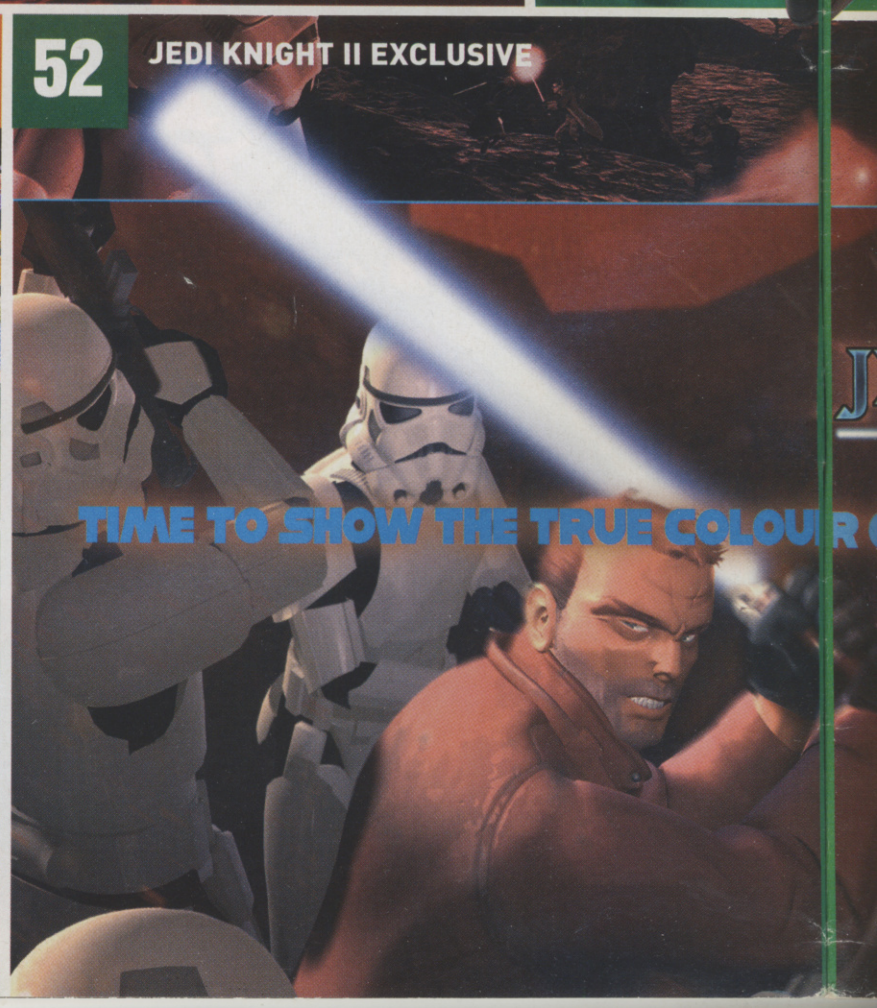
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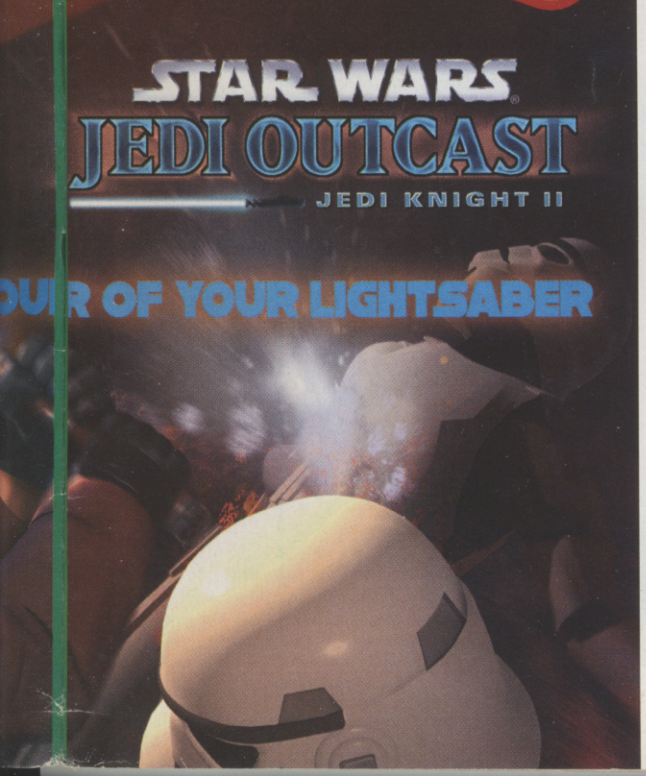
TIME TO SHOW THE TRUE COLOUR



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PLANET CVG

THE HOTTEST GAMES & GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

£150 GameCube!?

NINTY LIFTS THE LID ON 'CUBE'S UK LAUNCH

About bloody time too. Nintendo left UK gamers champing at the bit for months trying to work out when the hell it was going to release GameCube over here and what it'll cost. Now the wait it over. It's May 3. And it'll cost just £152, about half the price of Xbox and still cheaper than a cut-price PS2! Or will it...?

The long-awaited announcement confirmed what CVG sources had told us over a month before – a May launch rather than the Summer/Autumn schedule some speculation suggested. Ninty also announced 20 launch games it claimed cover all genres and appeal to all types and ages of gamers, including Luigi's Mansion, Wave Race: Blue Storm, Rogue Leader and Sonic 2, with Star Fox Adventures and Resi to follow after a couple of months, and Pikmin on June 14.

Nintendo went on to reveal a recommended 249 Euros (£152) price point for Europe, but indicated that the final decision was down to retailers. However, while high street shop sources' initial reaction was they'd want to set prices at the £150 mark, CVG remains cynical till we see it.

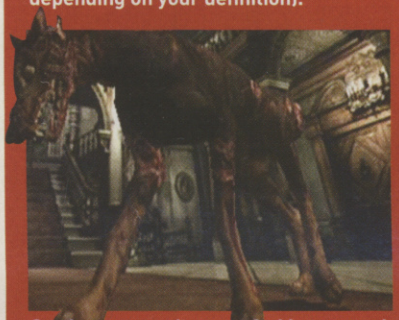
This is largely because UK gamers seem to pay more for just about everything than our continental cousins. Why? We've heard a thousands explanations and have given up trying to second guess import taxes and the like. Here's hoping that's all about to change.

And, much as Sony tried a double whammy with the surprise unveiling of the PSone soon after PS2 a couple of years back, Nintendo is set to lay into the gaming public with a 1-2 knockout double of its own. As CVG goes to press, news is emerging that Ninty is recommending a worldwide GBA price cut to just £60! Blimey. It has saved all its news for one big splurge! All that in the same week Sony denied another PS2 price slash!

GAMECUBE RESIDENT EVIL SPURT!

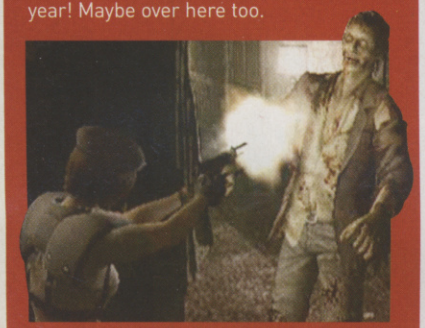
The Evil Dead!

Check it out! It's a zombie-sized feast of new Resident Evil GameCube shots. What you're looking at are screens from the first GC Res Evil, which comes out in March in Japan and 'soon after' launch in the UK (or Summer 2002, depending on your definition).



Spot's nose wasn't as wet & shiny as usual

A massively revamped version of the first-ever Res Evil, it'll be followed by FOUR Resident Evil games: Resident Evil 2 (a straight-up port of the old fave); an all-new Resident Evil 0, then ports of Nemesis and Code Veronica. In fact, all five versions are supposedly going to be released in Japan in the space of ONE year! Maybe over here too.



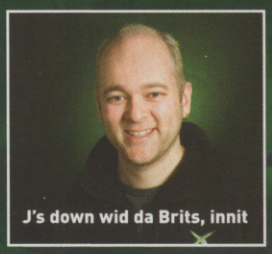
Jill delivers instant justice to fashion crims

Watch it – these beasties jump good

Even when dead, women still fancy Chris

'HOMESTATION' RUMOURS SCOTCHED

"Bollocks!"



J's down wid da Brits, innit

As Xbox cheeses go, they come no bigger than J Allard, the worldwide head of Microsoft's console operation. So he's the man CVG accosted for skinny on Xbox's UK launch.

First off, we wanted to know about the rumoured 'Homestation' (supposedly a piece of hardware using this name which played games, recorded TV, allowed web surfing, emails – you name it). Not so, said Allard.

"What do you say in England? Bollocks," he laughed when quizzed about the mythical machine. "Homestation was a codename for the Xbox at one point a long time ago. It's an old codename, that's all it is."

That's that sorted then. Allard went on to confirm a ramped up UK launch line-up (unsurprising given there's 45 titles released in the US already). Final details of the full shooting match have yet to be confirmed, but the likes of Wreckless and Jet Set Radio Future are in the frame. What's more, by June up to 60 of the 250 games in development should be released, according to Microsoft.

More surprising though was the revelation that Microsoft expects to have half a dozen online games running in Europe by the end of 2002, including Phantasy Star and Unreal Championship. Wowzer!

Driving like that, it's plain Wreckless

SLIT HIS THROAT!

Let your eyes take a holiday on these frankly wicked-looking shots of Commandos 2, being released by those geniuses at Eidos for the Xbox.

Yes, the huge PC hit will be ported to the Microsoft's console for tactical action strategy high jinks at the touch of a joypad button. And hey, there will be changes, too, with this version featuring a new control system to replace the pointing and clicking of the PC game. Expect Commandos 2 to stage Xbox sorties in the Spring.

And did we mention there's a PS2 version too? Aha, but did we also mention Eidos is doing a Champ Man for Xbox?

Can't afford an exotic holiday? You can now

"Now, where's the ciggy lighter for my GBA cable?"

Seeing inside buildings is new to Commandos 2

"COME WITH ME IF YOU WANT TO LIVE"

Yes, but what exactly *is* connecting chest to hips?

"Take that, you timeline tinkering tin can!"

It was always a blast chillin' out at the Terminator bar

In a blast of Xbox excellence, Terminator: Dawn Of Fate – a brand spanking new Terminator game – has been confirmed for Xbox.

Infogrames has set a summer date for the release, which will see players battling the evil Skynet corporation, in particular those pesky Terminators. In fact, the action takes place before the first film starts so is able to use its own storylines, although you will play as Reese, the hero of the first film. Judging from the shots, it should be bloodier than a bloodbath at an abattoir. Mmmm.

Hideo Games

Metal Gear Solid creator Hideo Kojima takes time out to talk to CVG

THE DECISION TO MOVE AWAY FROM SOLID SNAKE AS THE MAIN PROTAGONIST FOR THE GAME MUST HAVE BEEN A DIFFICULT ONE...

"The introduction of the new character, Raiden, allows the player to observe Snake from a distance. This gives Snake a depth that didn't exist before. You can also observe the friendship between Snake and Otacon, even more than in the prequel. Raiden is simply a narrator of the story. Solid Snake, who accompanies Raiden, is the main character of the story. Snake's monologue starts and ends the game. MGS1 is a game in which you become Snake. MGS2 is a game in which you infiltrate and fight with Snake."

WHAT'S THE FUTURE FOR THE METAL GEAR SOLID FRANCHISE? HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH, AND, IF SO, WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT? DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO MAKE GAMES AT ALL?

"The Metal Gear franchise will not end. It has become 'the people's Metal Gear Solid'. I will most likely not direct another Metal Gear myself. Just like the theme of MGS2 is about passing on things to future generations, I would like to pass on the development of MGS to another director. I myself would like to keep on creating different kinds of games."

THIS IS AN ONGOING QUESTION, BUT WE'D STILL LIKE TO KNOW: WHERE DO YOU AND KONAMI STAND ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF METAL GEAR SOLID FOR XBOX?

"No comment."

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE FUTURE FOR GAMES?

"There will be games in which you use actual robots with cameras and you fight against each other or destroy meteors while you get to watch your performance on a monitor (*Sounds like Robot Wars to us – ed*). This mixture of reality and virtual reality will be one direction in which games will evolve. One other thing: realism in entertainment is not necessarily about trying to make things 'more real'. People don't expect a game to be a simulator. What people want is a world and story into which they can escape. That is where an exaggerated form of reality is desired."

Give Us A Ring

GANDALF GOES MULTI-PLATFORM

You've all seen the film by now and the perhaps inevitable news is that two developers are bringing out Lord Of The Rings games this year.

First will be developer Universal, which snapped up the rights to Tolkein's books and plans to splurge platforms with games. Already in the pipeline are the Fellowship Of The Ring for Xbox and The Lord Of The Rings Part I for Game Boy Advance. Expect to see these in October this year. Universal also says it plans versions for the PC.

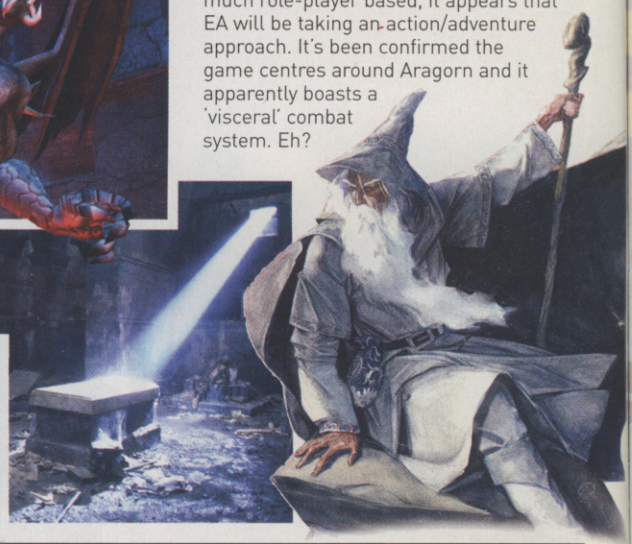
Meanwhile, developer EA won the rights to the film version of the series and has The Lord Of The Rings planned for this coming Christmas on PS2 – to tie in with the release of the second film, in fact. While Vivendi's games will be very much role-player based, it appears that EA will be taking an action/adventure approach. It's been confirmed the game centres around Aragorn and it apparently boasts a 'visceral' combat system. Eh?

Aragorn: EA's take looks like the movie Strider

Clearly not 'the game based on the movie' orcs

Not a hobbit, then

EA's game looks... real



ONLINE FFXI – NEW SHOTS

"This Goes All The Way To 11!"

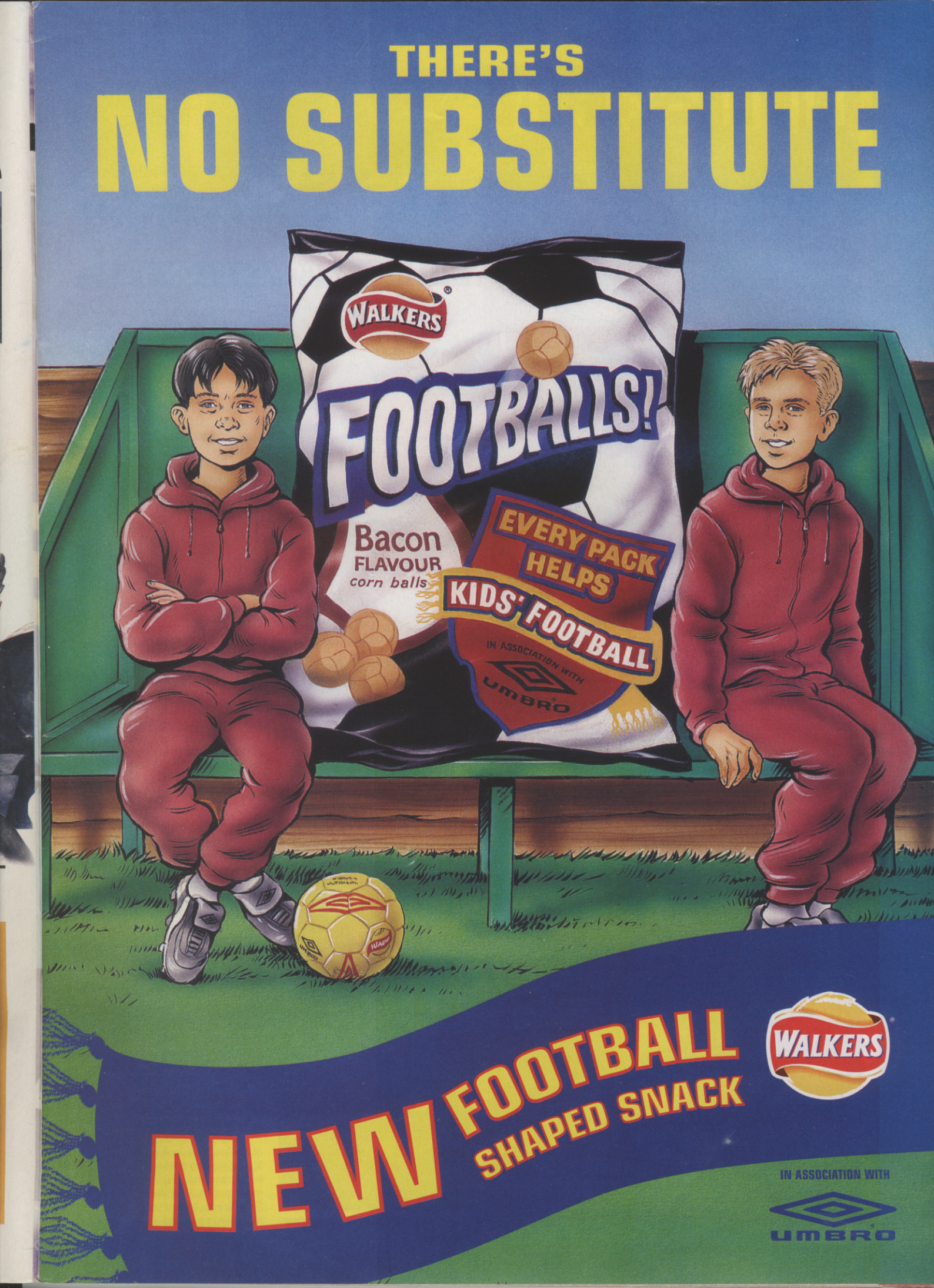
Feast your eyes on these amazing new Final Fantasy XI shots, which show some of the characters and locations and give you an idea of how the game will work. Oh, and there are some chocobos in there as well.

As you know, it's an online-only deal, and to get involved you need to visit www.playonline.com where you must sign up. If you do this, you'll get access to loads of goodies including FFXI wallpaper, as well as information on other FF-related gubbins. If you're planning on online RPGing though, you better make sure you've got a pukka Internet connection.

Chocobos return! Yeeees!

ID-ing made easy, we hope

Attack of the lama-camel?


THERE'S
NO SUBSTITUTE
WALKERS
FOOTBALLS!
Bacon
FLAVOUR
corn balls
EVERY PACK
HELPS
KIDS' FOOTBALL
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
UMBRO
NEW FOOTBALL
SHAPED SNACK
WALKERS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
UMBRO

OLD SKOOL

How it used to be...

15 YEARS AGO
April '87
LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE
Format: Commodore 64, Spectrum

Did you know computers are powered by little people living inside? Well, Little Computer People proved it, with a game where you had to look after one of the wee fellas. A forerunner to Black & White and Tamagotchi .

GUNSHIP. Format: Spectrum
PC thrills hit the Spectrum with a great helicopter/combat simulator from the experts at Microprose.

ENDURO RACER. Format: Spectrum
An average arcade racer becomes one of the Spectrum's finest hours. Fast and addictive.

LEADERBOARD. Format: Spectrum, C64, Amstrad
At the time it was the best game of golf we'd seen, spawning numerous sequels.

10 YEARS AGO
April '92
SONY PLAYSTATION
Format: Er...?

In a round-up of future gaming platforms, CVG made the biggest error in its history, proclaiming the machine looked the 'sad lad of the pack' next to the Phillips Cdi, Sega Mega CD and Nintendo Super CD. Needless to say, the guy who wrote it no longer works here.

SUPER OFF-ROAD. Format: Super Nintendo
Top-down racer that revived the bygone thrills of Super Sprint, a great multiplayer title.

BATTLETOADS. Format: NES
One of the greatest beat 'em ups to appear on the old Nintendo system. Who needs Ninja Turtles?

STAR TREK. Format: PC
Take control of the USS Enterprise in this Trek tie-in.

5 YEARS AGO
April '97
FINAL FANTASY VII
Format: PSone

The mammoth coverage began here, thanks to an import copy of Square's incredible RPG. We were stunned by the graphics and cinematic sequences. Luckily the gameplay and story were fantastic too.

BLAST CORPS. Format: N64
An almost forgotten gem from Rare: clear a path for a bomb-carrying truck by demolishing buildings.

ISS PRO. Format: N64
Pah! Who needs FIFA '98 when you could be playing this? Now in 3D and with superior gameplay.

GTI CLUB RALLY. Format: Arcade
A great multiplayer arcade racer, best played in Bomb Tag mode. What happened to the home conversion?

Silenced SMG. Nice

Dead man in pants

Commit sins in a church

"Take Him Out"

HITMAN 2 SCOPES IN ON PS2

Good news, the blinding PC sequel Hitman 2: Silent Assassin is coming to PS2 – and here are the shots to prove it.

As with the PC version, you play an assassin called out of retirement for one final job, equipped with some cool weaponry, such as poison darts.

The PC version has yet to land, but the early signs are good. You can play in first- or third-person, there are more open-ended missions, and the level design is better. Expect lots of sneaking around and hush-hush killing.

Let Us At Him. Now!

TONY 3 ON GBA!

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 is coming to GBA very, very soon. Interested? We thought so.

The sequel to one of the Game Boy Advance's essential games, it's packed with new courses, new tricks, new characters and some saucy little graphical tweaks.

Tony Hawk's is just as much fun to play on your handheld as it is on the biggest console next-gen has to offer. And seeing as this is shaping up to be *even* better than Tony Hawk's 2 on GBA, our fingers are twitching in readiness.

Link up for four-player madness

Handheld gaming never looked better

TEKKEN 4 ON PS2 – NEW SHOTS

Let's Talk Tekken

What on earth are these dazzling images scattered around the page?

Well, they've been put there so you can see just how very wondrous Tekken 4 on PS2 is shaping up to be. Obviously you can't tell from the shots, but for the first time backgrounds can be used during matches, and arenas have different levels. We're talking very special Tekken here, kiddywinks.

Well he would insist on those shades!

The Mechanized Space Ninja in full flow

Here at CVG we're particular fans of the luscious-looking Christie Monteiro, who dresses like cutey-pie soulstress Nelly Furtado but packs a mean punch. Christie is the pupil of Eddy Gordo, whom you'll remember from Tekken 2, and, like the rest of

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 ON PS2 STUNS TV STAR

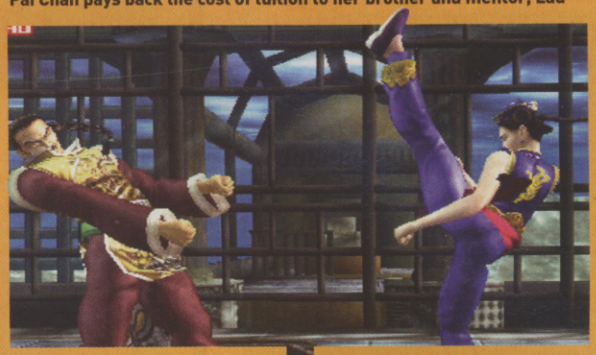
"It's Perfect," Says Oprah

"It *must* be arcade footage," said TV's Oprah Winfrey, on a recent visit to the CVG offices.

She was looking at our Virtua Fighter 4 footage, and we had to peel her off the ceiling when we revealed that the stunning images before her were in fact from the PS2 version. Lawks.

Apparently, Sega's legendary AM2 design team has moved all the brilliant elements of the arcade version of VF4 to the PS2. In fact, they claim to have made the *perfect* arcade port. Well, if the footage and the shots here are anything to go by, this game certainly stretches PS2's graphical muscle after a run of somewhat disappointing-looking games.

Oh – Oprah Winfrey didn't really visit us. Sorry.

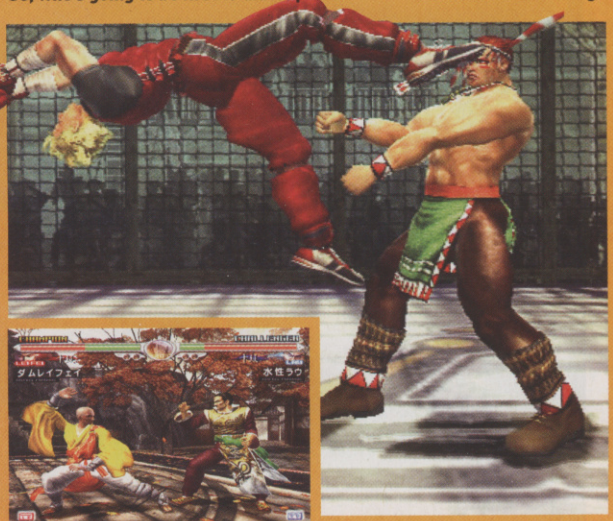

Pai Chan pays back the cost of tuition to her brother and mentor, Lau

So, who's going to be first to that flip kick?

Teach the AI how to fight!

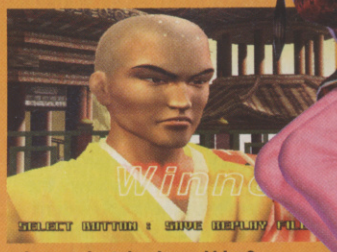
Shaolin kung fu. Hardcore!

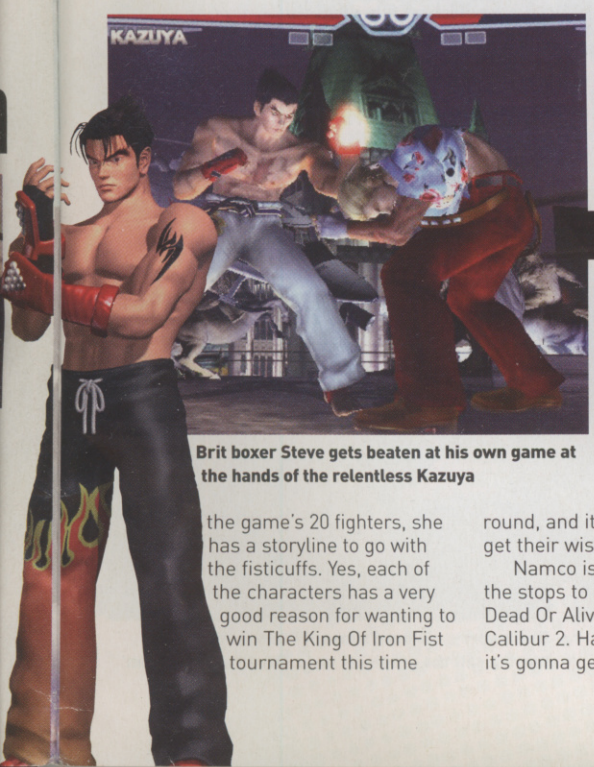
Toughest female wrestler since Lita


Awe, c'mon Jacky – see if you can win without the flip kick alright?

Pai's double-kick is tough to predict

Lei-Fei's moves are poetry in motion


...but can he take down Akira?


Brit boxer Steve gets beaten at his own game at the hands of the relentless Kazuya

Who'd you rather see – Christie or Eddy G?

Darling Ling – a T3 favourite

the game's 20 fighters, she has a storyline to go with the fisticuffs. Yes, each of the characters has a very good reason for wanting to win The King Of Iron Fist tournament this time round, and it'll be up to you to see they get their wish.

Namco is expected to pull out all the stops to stave off Virtua Fighter 4, Dead Or Alive 3 and even its own Soul Calibur 2. Hang on to your hat, Brown, it's gonna get rough.

Developer Top Trumps

Nakatani is the man behind the Tekken series. That's right, this is the guy behind the King Of Iron Fist tournament. Feel his trumping power.

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No problem, right? Er, right?	70
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GEEK OR GOOD LAD?	
Good lad, we reckon	78
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Tekken 4's console port is looking sweet	80

NEWS SHORTS

Bond is back, again. Gearbox Software, developer of Half-Life on PS2 and Counter-Strike on PC, has been signed by EA to produce the next James Bond title on various formats.

THQ is picking up where Sony left off in the racer stakes. Namco's insanely fast Moto GP is the latest game to turn up on its doorstep, and THQ will be bringing it to Xbox, but no release dates as yet.

Top PC frag-fest Return To Castle Wolfenstein is on its way to Xbox and PS2, with rumours flying that a GameCube version is in the works too. Raster, the team behind Quake III on DC, is working on it.

Top Japanese RPG developers Square and Enix have both confirmed they will not be bringing their big franchises to Xbox (Final Fantasy and Dragon Quest), with Square going as far to say it will not be making any games for it at all.

Capcom is talking about making its Devil May Cry series of games exclusive to PS2. This follows the announcement that the Resident Evil series is exclusive to Nintendo. Boo, we say.

Spot The Dan

See if you can find Dan's head hidden in the mag. There's a rare CVG t-shirt in it for the first email answer out of the hat. C'mon, now, how hard can it be?

Ish 243: Dan's not the one with the tusks

FIRST LOOK AND EXCLUSIVE PICS!

Bubble-icious!

The dividing line between games and cinema continues to blur. Forget motion-capturing women's norks so they bounce like it was a porno flick. To bring Y-Project's futuristic bubble city to life we're talking hiring architects and stage directors – for a first-person shooter!

Designed by German-based Westka, Y-Project is based on US outfit Epic's Unreal Warfare engine. And it looks so sweet you could stick it in a G-string, call it Jordan and take it to Amsterdam's Banana Bar and no-one would bat an eyelid. Except perhaps your missus.

We'll save on words by simply pointing you to our exclusive screenshots. Then imagine moments like a chase scene where you lose sight of your target but continue to track him by the path he's left while running through the particle fogging. And that's just the visuals.

Set on a planet overrun by Starship Troopers-style bugs, the game's structure and deep sci-fi story allow you to continually switch between rival factions, unlocking different weapons, sub-quests and ways to solve missions.

But while including some Deus Ex-style RPG influences like experience-based weapons upgrades and nano-technology, Westka wants to go further. So it has hired a development team with real-life experience in architecture and directing to add dollops of atmosphere, dramatic moments, style and classy cut scenes. Oh, and bouncing norks too. Roll on 2003!

Human colonists are overrun by their own genetic experiments. The Medusa gun turns 'em to stone

Mist particles float over the water in this demo level...

...And cling to the floor. Sweet!

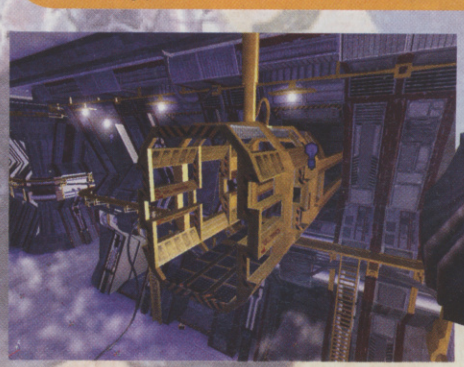
Even clothing is distinctively styled. Now *that*'s detail

Falling sparks from that vent look fan-bloody-tastic

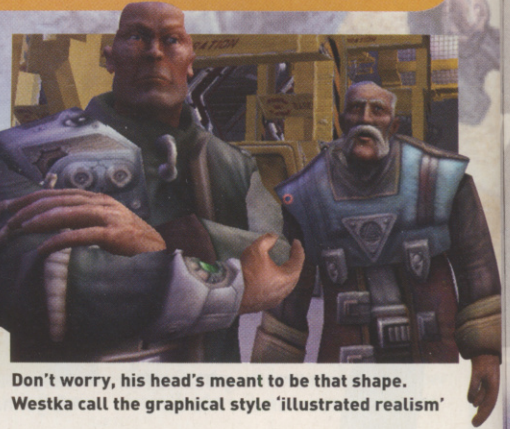
SCHOOL PROJECT

Sorry, Westka, but much as you've tickled our fancies with what we've seen so far, the name 'Y-Project' has got to go. Why? Cos recently there's been almost as many games called 'Project' as games called 'Kart'. Just check out our list below – and we weren't even trying. Besides, games with the word 'project' in them sound like something you have to do at school.

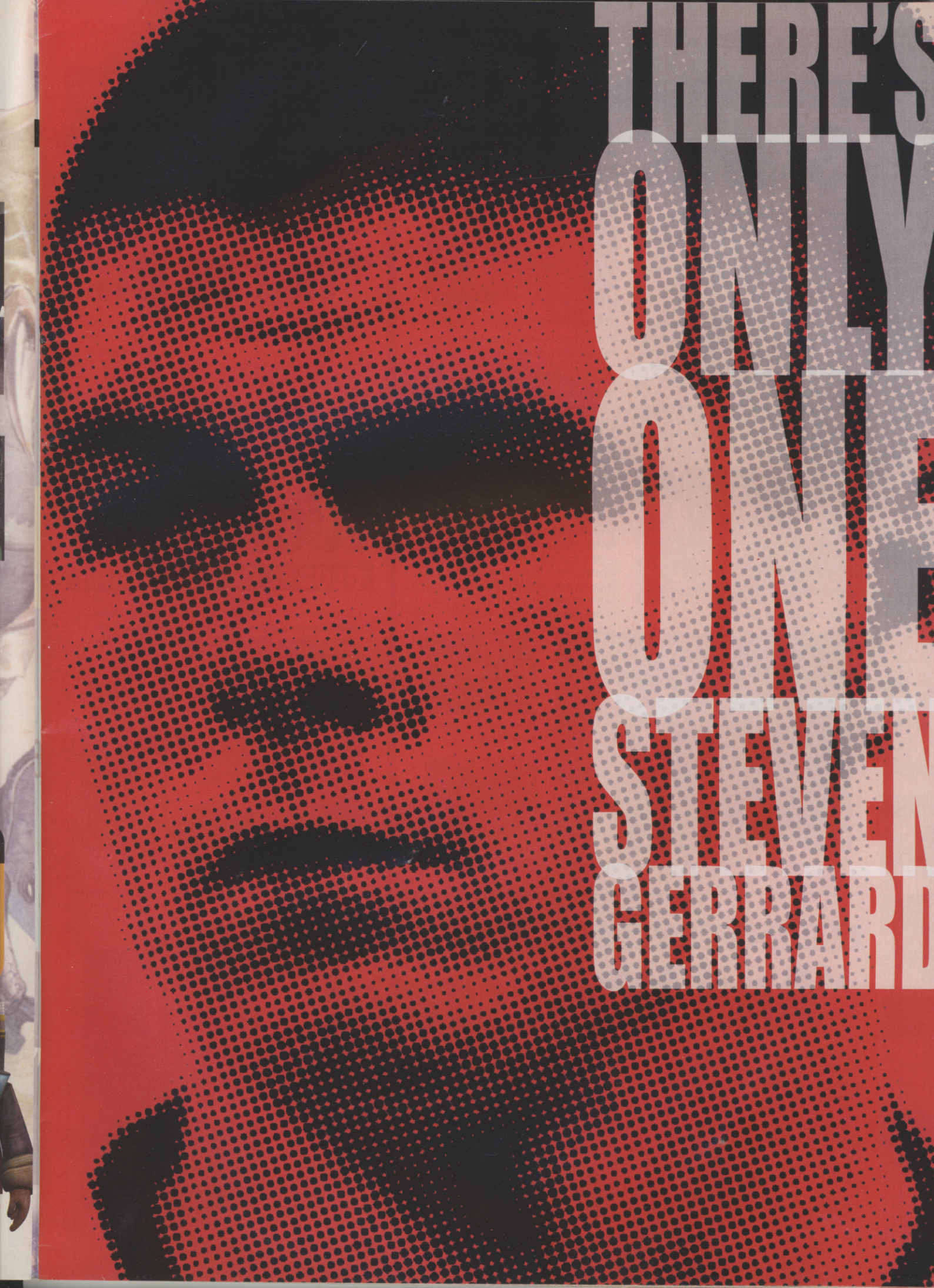
Project Gotham Racing – Microsoft's Xbox Racer
Project IGI (2) – Eidos's PC Action/shooter (s)
Project Eden – Core's PC/PS2 adventure with shooty bits
Project Overkill – Konami's PSone shoot 'em up
Project Arios – Infogrames' PC RTS
The Moon Project – Mattel's PC RTS



It's still early days (the hero doesn't even have a name yet), but environments look very promising



Don't worry, his head's meant to be that shape. Westka call the graphical style 'illustrated realism'


THERE'S
ONLY
ONE
STEVEN
GERRARD

FIRST SHOTS OF BRITNEY ON PS2

Slaves 4 Her!

Hardcore players wouldn't be seen within 50 miles of pop singer-licensed games, right? Well, you might just want to reconsider, if what we've seen of pop queen Britney's new PS2 dance game – Britney's Dance Beat – is anything to go by.

Let's get one thing clear from the start though, you won't be able to play as Britney, the rationale being that the half-dozen or so guys and gals you can play as instead add more variety. Er? Here at CVG, we'll be mixing strong voodoo magic at our secret subterranean shrine to the Goddess Britney to include an unlockable option. She does at least appear on-screen and you can unlock video concerts in which you choose the camera angle in real-time.

Britney prances at the back while you dance along to the beat

Far more interesting from the gaming point of view though is some of the innovative rhythm action features being incorporated, which replaces the traditional scrolling linear dance commands with a wheel format. Playing on either pad or mat, if one player takes a lead, then the other's command wheel is sometimes obscured, making it harder to keep the rhythm.

It's due out around May, and it's already clear that some real effort is going into making this a gamer's game as well as one that'll appeal to the Spears fan club. Woo!

No naked Britney cheat? Bah...

The wheel device makes for a exciting multiplayer game

Use either the pad or a dance mat

The bar at the bottom shows who's winning

Footie? Kung fu more like

Come on lads, kick the ball

RED CARD SOCCER PICS

"You're Off"

It had to happen sooner or later, and it has. Red Card Soccer is an 'extreme' footy game. None of your namby-pamby trotting around the field playing 'the beautiful game' – this is real rough and tumble stuff.

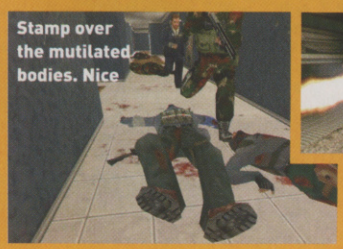
The game includes 32 international teams and real stadiums, but there, it seems, any resemblance to your average football game ends. Also included are power-ups hidden in the game, as well as 'extreme' animations for bicycle kicks, scissor kicks and shimmies. Could be good, so we'll be keeping an eye (and a fist) on it.

Kick. Ass.

GLOBAL OPS IS COMING

PC gamers, you have an embarrassment of riches when it comes to first-person shooters. And now there's another game jostling to be added to your want-want-need list: Global Ops.

It's just about to touch down and we've got code, so what better reason to print a couple of new shots to whet your appetite for online multiplayer first-person team-based terrorist killing. More next ish.


Stamp over the mutilated bodies. Nice

You want big miniguns and loads of ammo? You got it

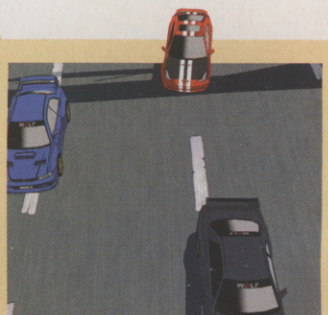
ANIMATED RACING FROM CAPCOM ON PS2

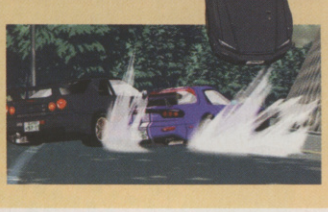
"And it's a draw!"

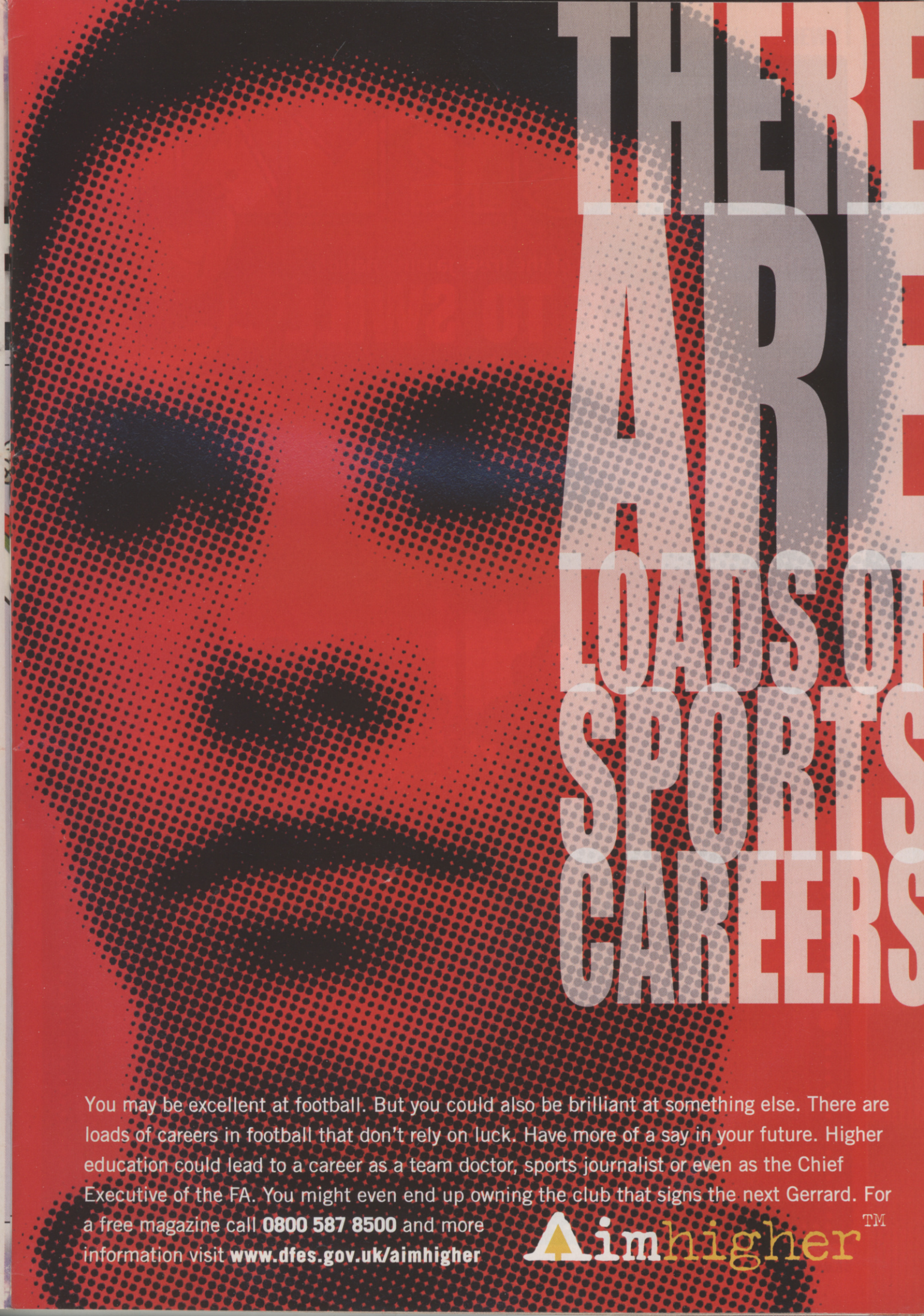
See these shots and that cool cartoon look? That's cel-shading, it's the current 'in' thing and Auto Modellista's cel-shaded from the bottom up.

Looks good, right? We think so, and we're hoping it's going to play just as well. Capcom is being secretive about it at the moment, but there's no denying it looks sweet as. What we do know is that it's the first PS2 racing game to go online. Indeed, lucky Japanese gamers play over the Net with it this spring. Gits.

Looks like Jet Set Radio, plays like Ridge Racer


It certainly looks stylish, but has it got the guts of GT3?


The water effects when you slide through puddles are really cool



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CACKMAN

The independent voice of the free gaming nation

LICENCE TO SWILL

The game's bomb. Stink bomb

Cackman heard a funny rumour recently about a game in the works based on Magnum PI. You know, the classic TV show starring uber pube-lipped stud muffin Tom Selleck as the Ferrari-driving Hawaiian private detective. Apparently, the developers couldn't get the rights to use Tom Selleck's likeness, so Magnum looked totally different and he couldn't drive the Ferrari. And they set the game underground. A Magnum game not featuring Tom Selleck or a Ferrari, and set in a cave? Hmm. It was, of course, too good to be true.

However, if they'd stuck Magnum on a quad bike and raced him across a cheese planet against Columbo, BA Baracus and Jessica Fletcher, it would have been out on all formats. Cos that's about as accurate as Hollywood-licensed games get nowadays.

Movie games have always had a reputation for being not so much blockbusters, as bowel-blockers, but now we get the movie games that aren't even based on the movies. Maybe it started with Star Wars. The distinctly whiffy 3D fighter, Masters Of Teras Kasi on PSone, put the likes of Luke and Vader in the ring with... Thok the Gamorrean Guard.

Then there's Shrek. Regardless of what Cackman thinks of the smug, overrated movie, he didn't expect it to produce Shrek Kart. Wait, no, that's exactly what Cackman expected. What did catch him by surprise is Shrek: Fairy Tale FreakDown. No, hang on, Cackman was expecting that too. Good grief. It's enough to make you play Star Trek: Klingon Academy.

Well, anyway, as you sit down to play Monsters, Inc. Monstropolis Mission, just think about what's in store this summer. And if you're looking forward to the awesome Spider-Man: The Movie game, just make sure you don't accidentally pick up Peter Parker's Pocket Puzzle Pellets, or Green Goblin Tractor Racing.

Oh well. Anyone for a bout of two-player 007 Racing?

Robot Wars: Arenas Of Destruction. One day we'll do this for real

ROBOT SNORES

In a recent interview with www.computerandvideogames.com, Hideo Kojima, creator of Metal Gear Solid and videogame 'genius', predicted that in the future we would entertain ourselves with "games in which you use actual robots with cameras and fight against each other." Incredible! Is he Nostradamus?

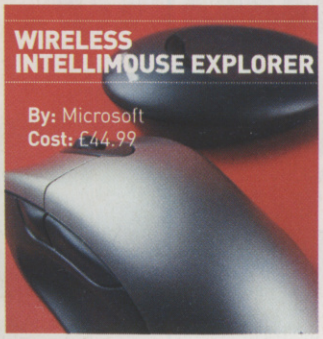
Next he'll be telling us it'll be presented by Craig Charles and everyone will only watch it cos there's a half-decent bird with a microphone and a low-cut top. All this from a man who still thinks running around with a cardboard box on your head is fun. He probably thinks smoking is cool too.

...imagine real robots...

...fighting in front of TV cameras. That'd be ace

Crash Test

DON'T GET LUMPED WITH TRIPE



A chunky, funky PC mouse with no wires. Plug the receiver unit into your USB port, hide it away somewhere and fool your friends with your magic cordless mouse shenanigans. The mouse itself feels lovely in your palm but it's a bit pricey and is ultimately a luxury purchase, rather than an essential one.

★★★★★★★★★★

Finally, a third-party PlayStation 2 pad that doesn't have sticks looser than a footballer's morals. Hoorah! The pad looks an odd shape but it sits nicely in the hands and the stiff sticks are a wonder. We had trouble with button-bashing sports games, but the button layout is great for almost everything else.

★★★★★★★★★★

Looking for a petite pad to match your cutie console? Then check out this most special of PSone pads. It looks weird and tiny but it works surprisingly well and there's even some hefty rumble technology built into the unit. Like Joytech's PS2 pad tested this month, this PSone controller has got good stiff sticks.

★★★★★★★★★★

Play import movies on your PS2. It's not a new idea but this kit automatically selects the disc's region and would be a breeze to use if not for an awkward install process. Still, once you've faffed about it works well enough. Just make sure your TV is NTSC-compatible though, or you'll be in black and white hell.

★★★★★★★★★★

ISS MULTI-FORMAT BLIZZARD!

Top Footy Action

No matter what next-gen machine you plump for, the good news is that you'll be able to play ISS 2 on it.

Konami's excellent footy game is coming to PS2, GameCube AND Xbox, with a PS2 launch of April confirmed and the other two to follow. These shots are from the 'Cube version. This sequel includes real player names for the first time, heaps of modes, and 50 international teams.

"I barely touched 'im!"

Choose camera angles

Mmm, pretty colours

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MULTI-FORMAT TOP SELLERS

1	Max Payne	(PS2, PC)
2	Grand Theft Auto III	(PS2)
3	Harry Potter	(PS, PC, GBC, GBA)
4	FIFA 2002	(PS2, PS, PC)
5	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	(PS, GBC, PS2)
6	007: Agent Under Fire	(PS2)
7	Pro Evolution Soccer	(PS2)
8	The Sims: Hot Date	(PC)
9	Championship Manager 2001/2002	(PS2)
10	The Weakest Link	(PS, PC)

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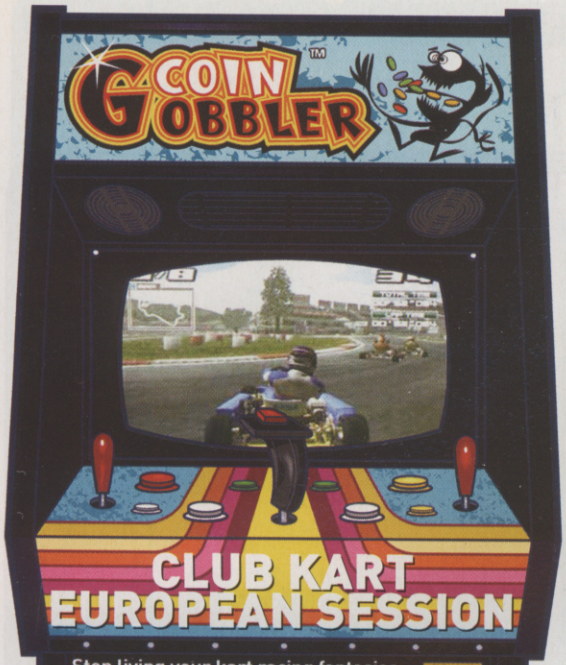


Stop living your kart racing fantasies through the likes of Mario on a tiny GBA screen, and do it for real... kind of.

Club Kart has some neat tricks. First insert your Club Kart Card (you'll find them next to the arcade cabinet), create and customise your character and save it to the card. This enables you to save your progress and your rank. Strap yourself into the cockpit and go head-to-head against other drivers in a mad championship mode. Club Kart is loads of fun and the thrill of smashing about with your mates in multiplayer is awesome.

ALL THE DINO BASHING YOU NEED

Turok Rocks!

In a move of almost unmatched generosity, the kind men at Acclaim are developing the new Turok game for all the consoles your heart desires.

Well, almost all. The Game Boy Advance is left out, but maybe if we ask Acclaim really nicely... In the meantime, top first-person dinosaur slaying action will be spread liberally across PS2, GameCube and Xbox, so we can expect visuals of breath-taking beauty to go with the usual mix of free-roaming exploration

It looks like all the classic Turok sniping weapons are going to make a return

Turok's crossbow has come a long way since his N64 days

Foot 'n' Mouth

Even the best-laid plans can go tits up in gaming land

Poor old Peter Noble PR. You couldn't help but almost feel sorry for the UK firm after it sent out a promotional email claiming how the recent suicides of three rocks stars, EMF's Zack Foley, Feeder's Jon Lee and Big Country's Stuart Adamson, 'serve as an ironic twist leading up to the release of computer game Rock Manager'.

After the suddenly-sensitive games industry tutted in horror, Noble himself sent an apologetic email to CVG and the games world at large, telling industry mag MCV: "I guess I was just trying to be adventurous." Wow, turns out there is such a thing as bad publicity after all.

MAD DASH FOR THE XBOX

Mario Kart type racing... without karts

Or Rayman M... without Rayman?

Get The Runs

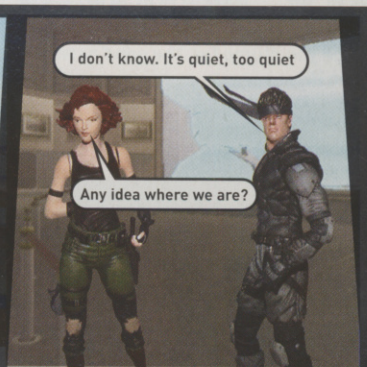
Mad Dash Racing? What's that then? Well, it "combines high-speed combat racing and 3D adventure action with a crew of motley characters for an insane multiplayer competition," says the press release.

It's basically Mario Kart meets the Dreamcast's Pen Pen Triathlon. It's a laff and one of the few out-and-out cartoony games on the Xbox. Due in March.

DUMPED

TWO TEAMS OF INCOMPETENTS, ONE STRANGE AND EXOTIC LOCATION, FIRST HOME WINS. HELP DECIDE THEIR FATE...

First heat winners Team A are already well on their way to a historic double



But Team B has stowed away on the same ship

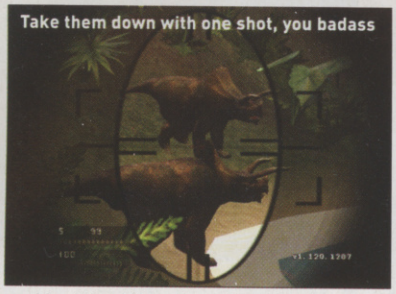
Team A enjoy the trip in First Class

Meet Terry. Terry Dactil

Zoom in, lock on and kill!

The birds!

Turok promises gorgeous environments



Take them down with one shot, you badass

and baddie killing. If you haven't played Turok, you've missed a treat. He's a native Indian geezer who does a bit of dinosaur hunting. Armed with a crossbow, he charges around jungles while other geezers and dinosaurs try to kill him. It's not brain surgery, but it's quality.

Seeing as the game's previous N64 versions looked great – and judging from these shots – it's going to look the business. Turok drops late summer.

In The Can

UNIVERSAL GOODIES ON THEIR WAY

Universal don't just make films, you know. No, they make games too, and the company has a killer line-up for this year.

You already know about The Thing, right? A game adaptation of the classic horror flick. Universal also has The Scorpion King for the GameCube, based on The Rock's character in The Mummy Returns, and there's the Incredible Hulk game (no platform yet). Lastly, Crash Bandicoot XS is coming to Game Boy Advance around April.

Crash, bang, wallop!

Scorpion King goes GBA

Some *Thing* evil's coming

NEWS SHORTS

The first-ever Wallace & Gromit videogame is set to become a reality. Bam! Entertainment has signed a deal with Aardman Animations to develop games on the company's characters and the first one appears early next year. Expect multi-format meltdown.

In more film and TV tie-in news, it's been announced that there will be a game of Gremlins for the Game Boy Advance to be released later this year. Just room for one shot, which we must stress, is 'a work in progress'.

Also on the PSone, a new Atari Best Of package is scheduled for release and is called 'Atari Redux', obviously trying to cash-in on the kudos of Apocalypse Now Redux. Let's just hope the games compilation isn't long and drawn out though, like the re-released movie.

Bless that little Rayman. He may have no arms, but the series certainly seems to have a good set of legs. The latest version of the (some might say) mildly irritating platform hero comes out on PSone next month and it's gonna be called Rayman Rush.

Team B get camouflage in the salad bar

Snake dives for cover from a vicious grind

Too late, Team B discover the Hawkster's true target

WHO WINS? WHO'LL BE BACK?

Email mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

HOMER AND EDDIE

Mark email 'Team A'

SOLID SNAKE AND MERYL

Mark email 'Team B'

NEW STAR WARS SHOTS

"Race Ya"

If there's one thing in life you can rely on, it's that the newest Star Wars game will have a longer and an even more tongue-twisting name than the last one.

So welcome to Star Wars Racer Revenge: Racer II for PS2. Obviously, it's the sequel to Star Wars Racer and once again sees you taking control of a podracer and tanking it round courses, just like the best bit of Episode I.

In all there are 18 tracks and five new worlds, with 16 podracers to choose from. LucasArts says it has tweaked AI, and graphics have been buffed up, but otherwise it's racer business as usual.

V-RALLY 3 WINDFALL

Muddy Hell

Get your wheels dirty on PS2 and GBA this time

Shots of the GBA version are looking incredible

Heads up, rally fans, Infogrames' super-cool V-Rally 3 is coming to PS2 AND Game Boy Advance in June.

Boasting a game engine called 'Twilight' which apparently brings out "stunning detail", the third instalment of the classic now has more interactive tracks, so stuff will break when the cars slam into it. Elsewhere, it's detail, detail, detail all the way.

WE MAKE THIS MAG

Meet CVG

Jenny McComb, Designer

"Buffy? Hot? Now that's truly sad. What kind of weird-arse gets his rocks off watching some bint banging stakes into blood-sucking vamps, eh, Les? Er, Les? Les...?"

Les Ellis, Games Editor

Has been attending church meetings, mowing his lawn, baking cakes and getting ready for the vicar's Spring tea party. Where he plans to eat all the guests.

Mike Cooper, Writer

CVG's screenshot grabbing technical genius. If it has a screen, he can wire it up to something to take images. "Xbox? PC in a box. Pish easy." 14 hours later, he's a gibbering wreck.

Alex Simmons, Editor

Has been furthering the cause of assisted euthanasia by offering Salt Lake 2002 to anyone feeling suicidal. "If that doesn't push 'em over the edge, nothing will."

Dan Payne, Art Editor

As every boy scout knows, it's good to be prepared. So Dan's already organised every detail of his 2002 E3 trip. The booze, the birds... Except he's not allowed to go.

Lee Skittrell, Senior Writer

Has acquired a fanclub leaving love messages on his office voicemail. 'Mr mobile phone' is never to be seen when these messages are left. Nor has he complained. Odd.

Pete Walker, Deputy Editor

After seeing the Unreal Warfare engine used in Y-Project, he declared "The gameplay's like Jordan's nose – it's nice but you can't help but gawp at something else."

computer and video GAMES

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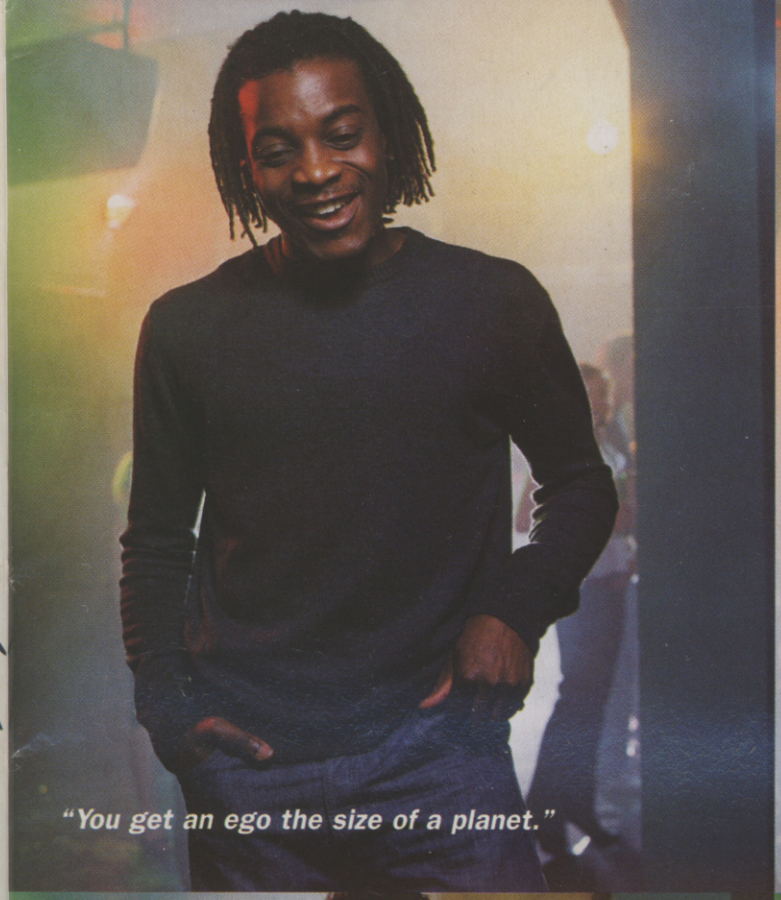
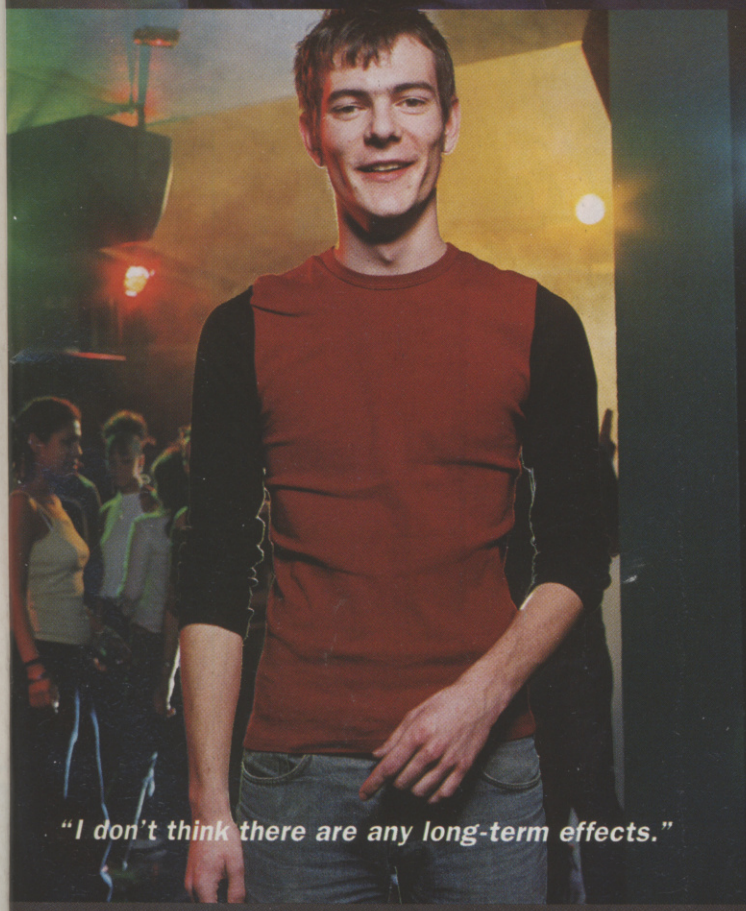
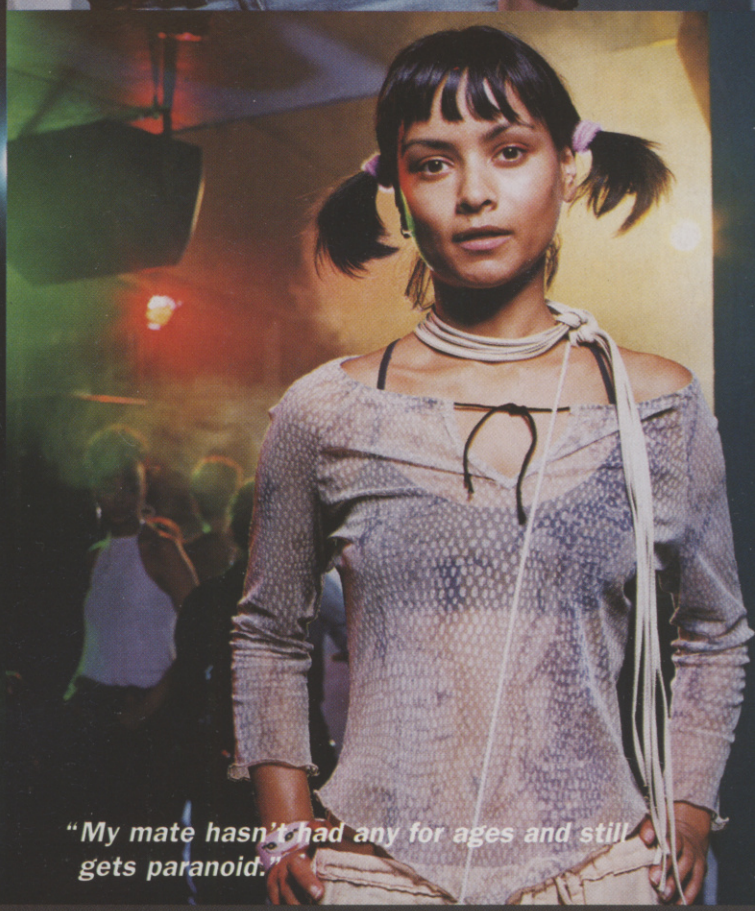


"You get an ego the size of a planet."

"I've seen a lot of messy, annoying people."



"I don't think there are any long-term effects."



"My mate hasn't had any for ages and still gets paranoid."

One night. One club. One question:

What do you know about cocaine?

XBOX COMPO

XXXX ME!

£1,600 worth of sexy Xbox gear to be won with Amazon.co.uk

Xbox is the most powerful games console ever. And nationwide anticipation is reaching fever pitch as the UK launch on 14 March steadily draws near.

If getting your hands on one as soon as possible is your mission, but you can't see a way past the 'queueing outside a shop at midnight to pay money for one' option, Amazon.co.uk is offering a cheat code to the next level of console gaming. The top UK online retailer is giving four lucky winners the chance to be one of the first people in Britain to own an Xbox – and you won't even have to leave the house to collect it! That's right, they'll deliver it right to your front door.

The four blaggers will each win a Mayhem Bundle, which includes an Xbox, a copy of Halo and Dead Or Alive 3, as well as an extra official controller – a stunning set-up perfect for experiencing the awesome power of Xbox from day one.

However, don't despair if you miss out, as you can pre-order Xbox bundles or games now (while stocks last), and Amazon.co.uk will deliver to your door on launch day. Sorted.

amazon.co.uk™

WIN WIN WIN!

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN, ANSWER THIS SIMPLE QUESTION: Which company makes Xbox?

A. Microsoft ☐

B. Sega ☐

C. Sony ☐

D. Nintendo ☐

Name ..... **Age** .....

Address .....

.....

.....

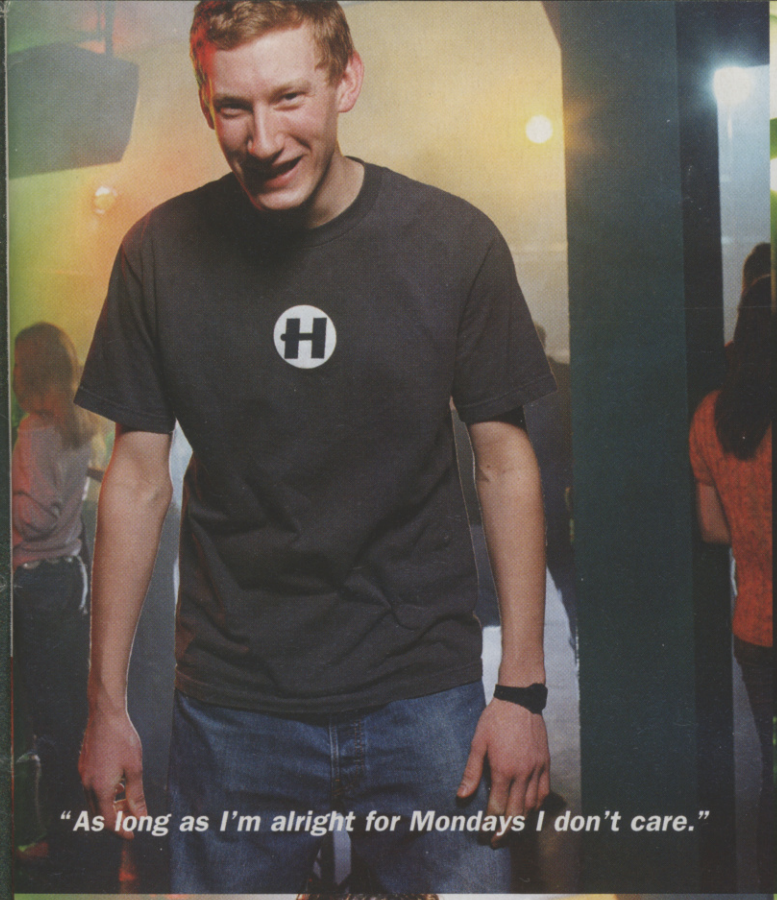
Telephone .....

Email .....

The competition deadline is March 7. Send your entries marked 'CVG Xbox compo' to:

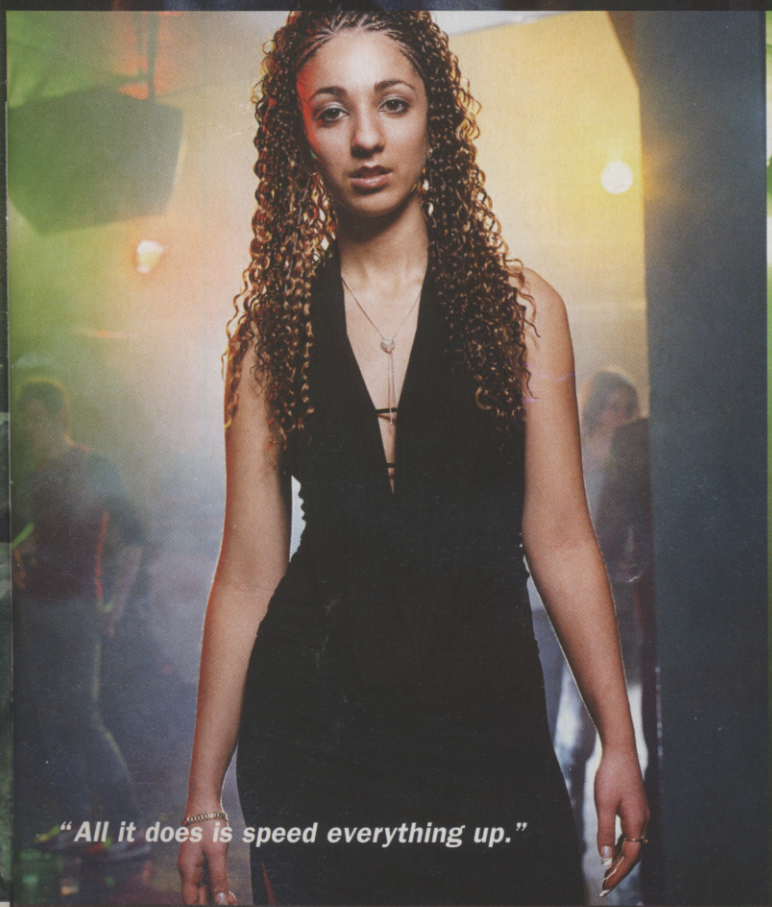
The Red Consultancy
77 Wimpole St
London
W1G 9RU

Terms and conditions: Amazon.co.uk may substitute a prize of equal or greater value for any prize. Any unclaimed prizes will remain the property of Amazon.co.uk

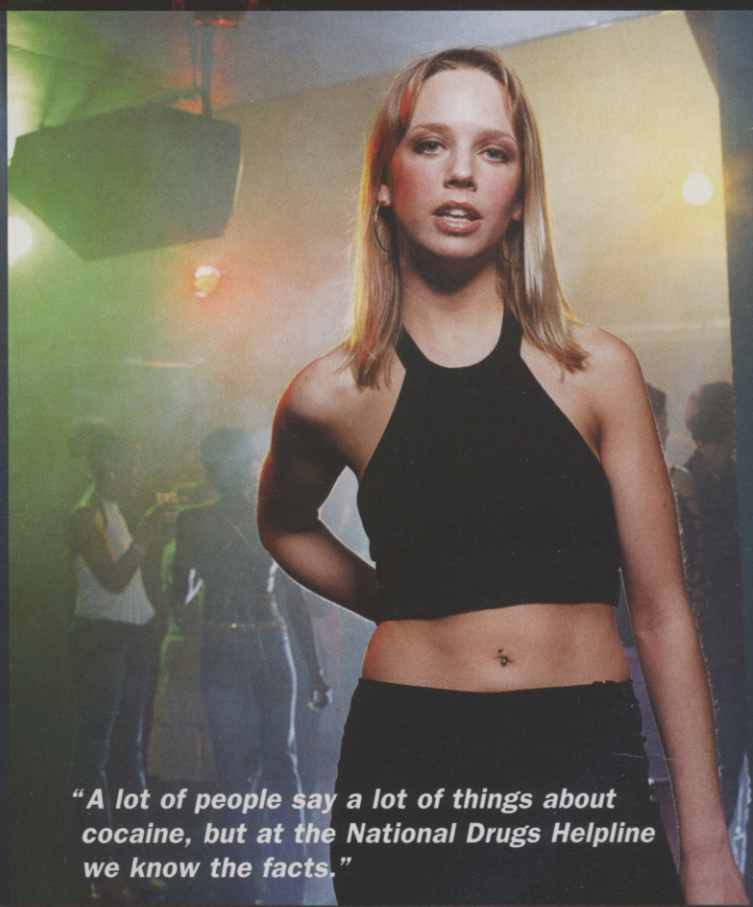


"As long as I'm alright for Mondays I don't care."

"I felt on edge for five days, I couldn't sleep or anything."



"All it does is speed everything up."



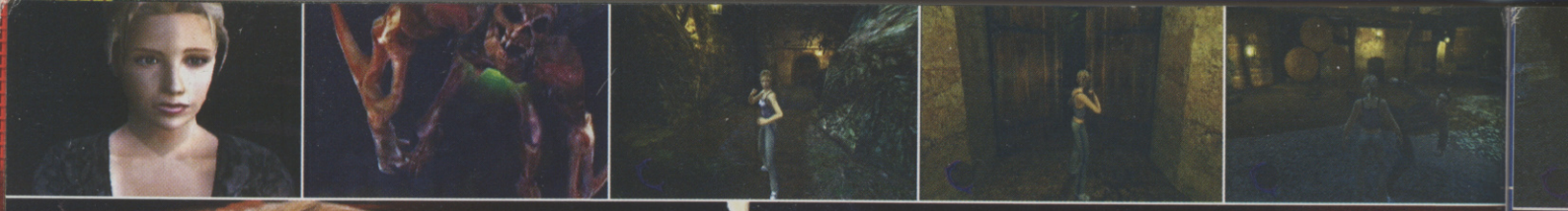
"A lot of people say a lot of things about cocaine, but at the National Drugs Helpline we know the facts."

national drugs helpline

0800 77 66 00

If you're wondering how cocaine causes anxiety or paranoia, call us.

www.ndh.org.uk

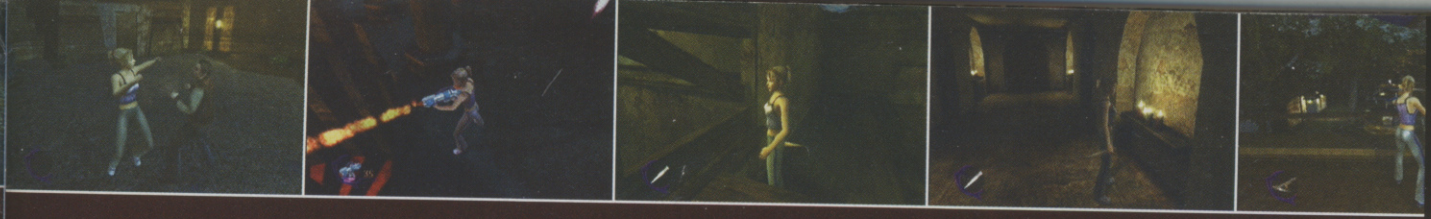


Buffy the Vampire Slayer

BUSTED OPEN

In a world exclusive preview, CVG delves deep inside Buffy's universe

FORMAT: XBOX **OUT:** APRIL 2002 **PLAYERS:** 1 **DEVELOPER:** THE COLLECTIVE **PUBLISHER:** EA **WORDS**



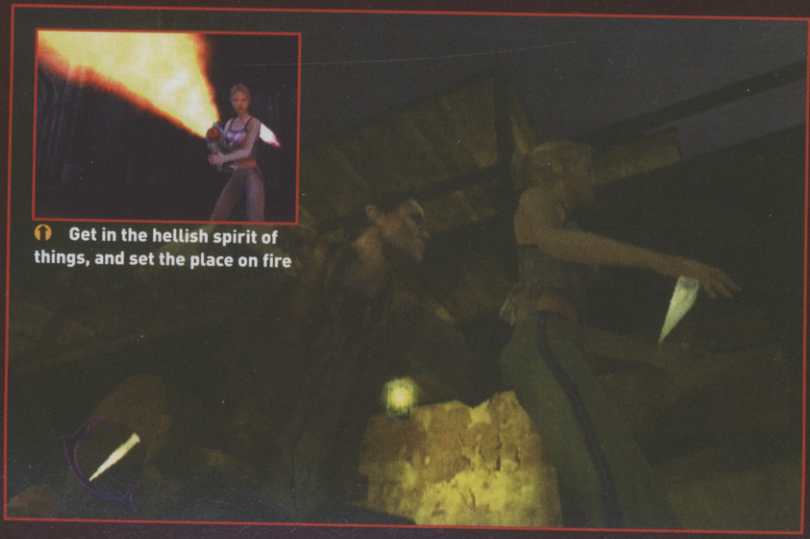
Buffy hasn't done much to dispel the myth that blondes are dumb. Think about it, she's a petite young girl weighing no more than a bag of feathers, who stays out all night fighting vampires and all sorts of other barmy beasts, with nothing more than a little sharp wooden stick and a few flash moves to protect her. But then again Buffy's no ordinary blonde teenager, because she's gifted with some serious martial arts skills that would put any grand master to shame, and she's got more balls than a Viagra-filled SAS soldier.

The vamp-slaying vixen's transition into the videogame arena has been long and eagerly awaited, and CVG has torn Buffy on Xbox inside out in order to bring you an exclusive in-depth preview.

LESS BRAIN, MORE BRAWN

We all knew that Buffy's debut was going to be a puzzle-solving action adventure game. But when you get stuck in you soon realise that this is primarily a class 3D beat 'em up, and all the puzzling and adventuring is secondary to the kick-ass action. This gives fight fans a great reason other than DOA3 for investing in Microsoft's big black behemoth. Busting heads Buffy style is a genuine thrill, as you link massively mean combos on packs of vamps, slam creatures ferociously into walls, and pull off all sorts of blinding power-up attacks.

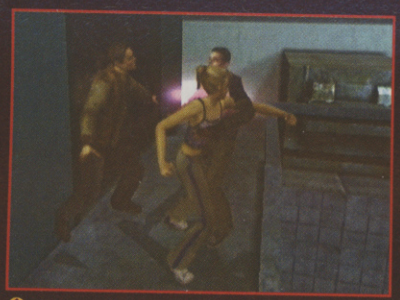
Developer The Collective has created a finely balanced fighting game and then gone and combined it with a beautiful and authentic-looking adventure. Fans of the TV show are sure to burst with excitement when they lay their hands on this puppy, and if you appreciate the simple joy of kicking the crap out of hideously ugly freaks, you're bound to drench your draws when you get stuck in to the awesome brawling bonanza that is Buffy The Vampire Slayer.



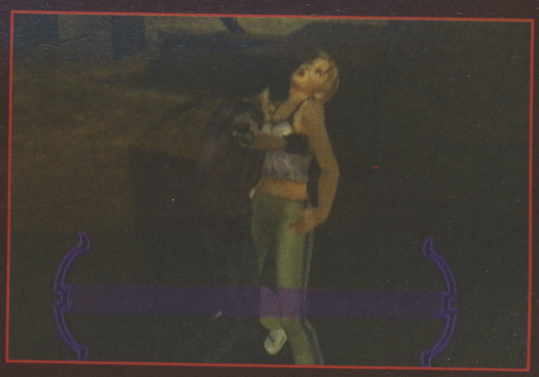
Get in the hellish spirit of things, and set the place on fire

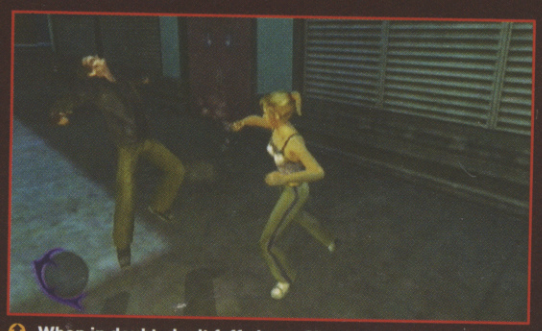
If someone tries to spring you from behind, spin around and thrust a stake hard into his sternum. That should stop it happening again

If you drop your guard for a second, you could find a vampire stuck to your neck like a giant sucking leech



You can take more than one enemy out at the same time with big attacks, like this awesome haymaker





When in doubt, don't faff about. Simply clock your attacker square on the chin and watch 'em drop like a sack of potatoes

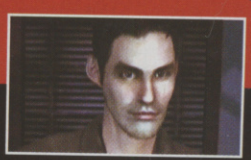
All of the creatures you come across look like they've received a severe beating with the ugly stick

BUFFY'S GOT BACKUP

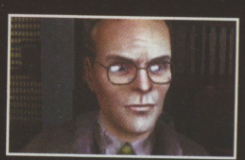
As the Buffster violently slays her way through the adventure, she'll interact with most of the evil characters from the hit TV series. You'll come face to face with The Master, Drusilla, truckloads of demons, and tons of other creepy creatures of the night. But like Britney, Buffy's got a big entourage of mates to help her in her slaying duties, and, as you'd expect, they all play a significant role in the overall plot of the game.

Buffy: Looks sweet but if you have unusually large canines she'll stab your heart with a stake. Feisty!

Willow: Computer whiz and technical uber-nerd



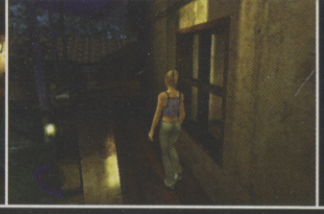
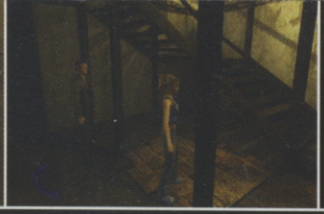
Xander: A greasy but seriously loyal crew member



Giles: Oxford University dropout whose intellect helps Buffy fight evil

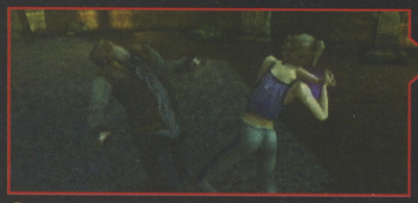
Cordelia: One of Sunnydale's snobbiest and sweetest-looking lovelies

& SCREENSHOTS: MIKE COOPER

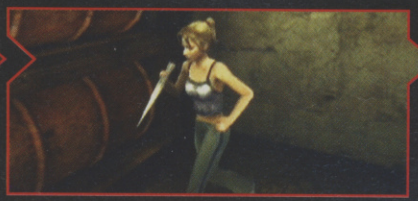



TRAINING'S A NIGHTMARE

Your speccy pal, Giles, guides you through a cool training mission, which gets your slaying skills up to scratch and introduces you to the basic Buffy gameplay. However, at the beginning of the mission you'll feel as if your buddy's treating you like the local village idiot by instructing you how to negotiate the simplest of terrain... but don't be fooled. Within seconds the pace and difficulty of the training soon picks up – you're thrown into combat with super-tough demons, forced to become a crossbow markswoman, and find yourself swiftly mastering Buffy's favourite weapon, the stake. And as well as flexing your leg and arm muscles, your grey cells receive a little workout, because there's a puzzle for you to solve along the way. Once you crack the mission though, things start getting a bit freaky. Then Buffy wakes up, and you realise it's all been a horrible nightmare. Nice twist!

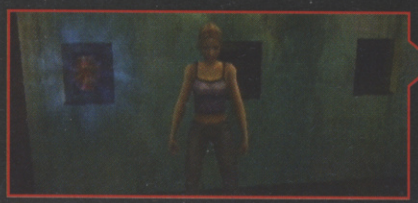


The combat erupts, and you deal out a heavy double-handed hammer blow. Kerr-rack!



Once you've kicked the hell out of a few brutes, you locate Buffy's tool of choice – the stake

Time for more fisticuffs action, but this time you're on the receiving end of a relentless attack



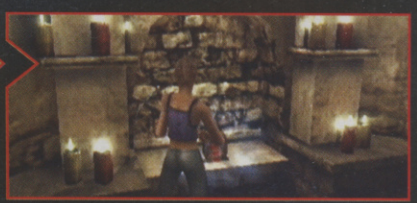
The puzzle element begins when you find the first stone key and place it in the monument

This triggers a staircase to emerge out of the ground, enabling you to access a new area

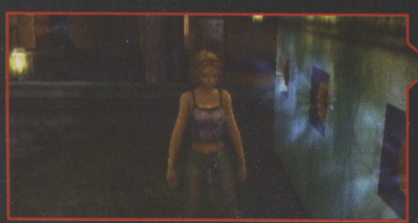
Then it's up on to a balcony, where Giles instructs you in the art of using a crossbow

You can switch to first-person mode, but nailing the tiny vamps in the distance is no easy feat

Spike the enemies below, then another key lets you into the bell tower to dislodge the bell



The bell crashes through the floor and unlocks a secret passage where another stone key lurks



Fight more vamps, return to the monument, then use the last key to open up the church doors

This is when stuff gets weirder than those strange people who live under Les's bed

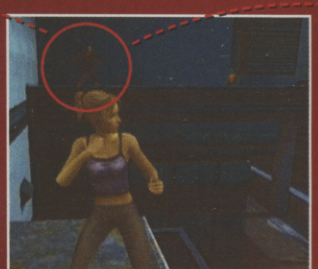
Suddenly you wake up, but the nightmare's only just beginning... mwa ha ha!

ON THE HUNT

You can run but most enemies will catch you up and start kicking shades out of your cute behind. So if you're in the middle of a brawl and think, "I'm off for a rest on those boxes," forget it because the enemy AI is pretty sharp. In a flash, they'll hunt you down, wrap their gobs around your throat, and neck a few crimson pints.

Time for a breather, so you clamber onto a high crate to hide

But the enemy spots you and leaps up onto a balcony



Before you can think, he's legged it towards the end

POWER-UP AND PULVERISE

Power-ups are the staple diet of every true videogame hero, and this vampire-slaying heroine is no different. Every time you deal out the whupass and kill an enemy, a haze of light appears around the corpse (a bit like in Onimusha), and when you approach it Buffy will automatically soak it up, charging the power bar above your health bar.

When you've duffed up enough nasties, it'll max out and a kind of Ready Brek redish glow will surround her for a while, enabling you to pull off some wickedly hardcore chop socky special attacks that would make even Jet Lee jealous.

After vapourising a vampire, a floaty source of power drifts up into the air

And in certain situations a special red ball of energy appears...

Soak this up and you'll become fully charged and instantly ready to wreak total havoc

I KNOW KUNG FU!

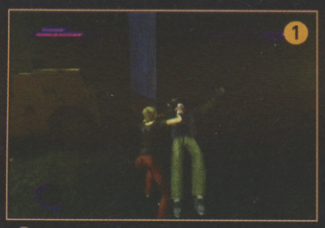
Forget Hong Kong kung fu legends like Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, and Jet Lee, 'cos Buffy could kick the crap of all three of them at once (if Bruce was still alive).

The majority of the action in EA's game sees you engaged in some pretty insane hand-to-hand, foot-in-face, knee-in-balls kind of combat. You're equipped with tons of cool moves, like high kicks that'll send enemies spiralling to the floor, throws that slam your foes crashing hard to the ground, head stamps that pulverise the ugly bonces of any creature unlucky enough to be caught napping, and bundles of other bone-crunching attacks.

AIM FOR THE NUTS

What's so impressive is how fluid, fast and realistically solid the brawling action is. You're exchanging kicks and punches with a vamp on the left of the screen, but you spot a guy running towards you from the right. So you quickly flick the anolog stick to the right, hammer the punch button, and Buffy naturally swings around and thumps the freak, sending him smashing into a wall and bouncing to the floor.

Then you can immediately carry on kicking the other dude's head in. The motion-captured movements of your character and the way you physically interact with enemies feels and looks just as solid and intense as a bout in DOA3, except there are often more than two opponents trying to cave your face in. Mint.



You pick him up by his throat, and chuck him like a rag doll...

Sending the vamp flying about 20-feet backwards

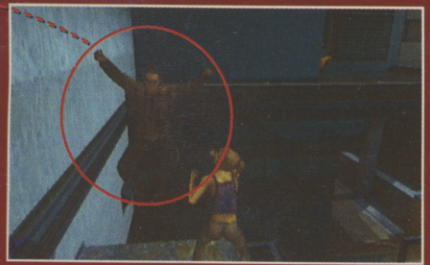
Wait for him to get up and twat him in the jaw with a power punch

Things are under control when King Kong shows up

Get hands-on and punish the giant with an arm-wrenching throw

But instead of running like a girl, you spin around and kick him in the nuts. Oomph!

Finish the brutal pair off with a dazzling flurry of rapid kick attacks



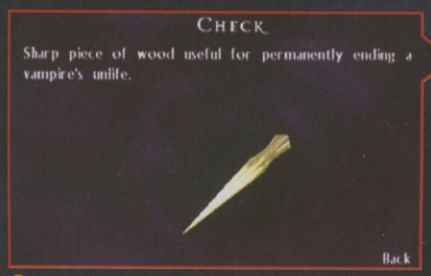
Then suddenly the freaky creature leaps across onto your 'safe' hiding place

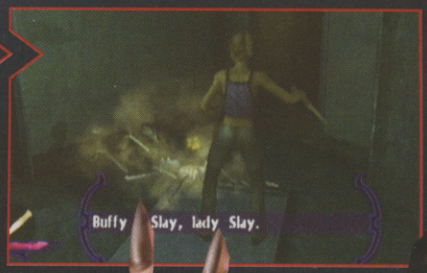
An all-out fight kicks off on this tiny makeshift arena...

And the vampire's thirst for blood sends him diving in for your jugular

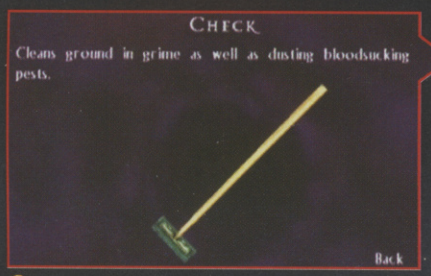
TOOLED UP

As you progress you'll come across some majorly cool weapons, and it's definitely worth exploring each level thoroughly as some of the equipment is well hidden. In keeping with the kooky comic tone of the TV show, some of the weapons are quirkily makeshift and a laugh to use, like the pump-action water gun that can be used to fire holy water, or modified to become a flame-thrower. And there's the mop, which Buffy wields with all the grace and speed of a Shaolin master. It's hard to top the satisfying feeling of running around as Buffy and cracking heads with a mop handle. Clack!

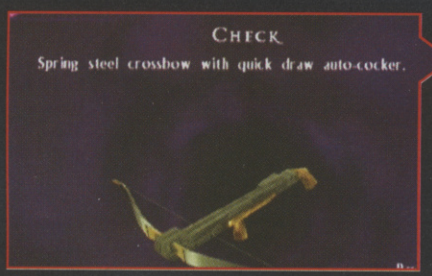




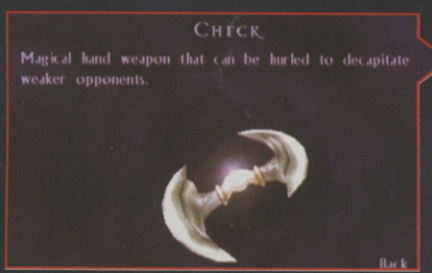
Use the stake close range for stabbing or throw it like a dart

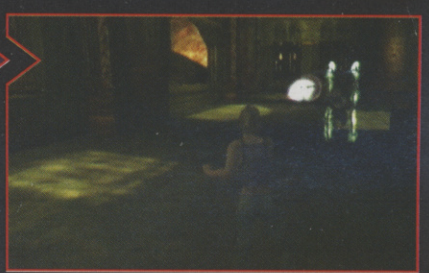


Caught in a sticky situation? Whip out your mop and use it like a kung fu pole

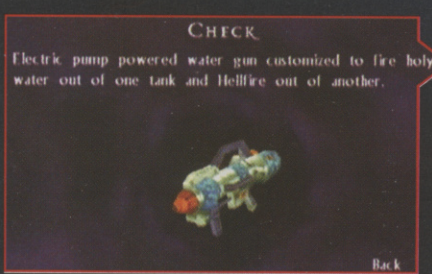


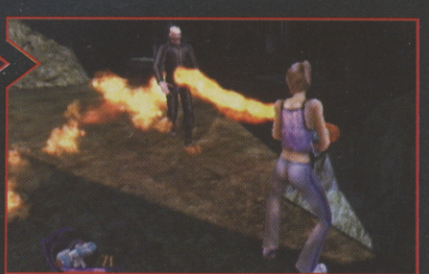
Crossbow: If you don't want to smell the foul breath of your enemies, pick them off at a distance





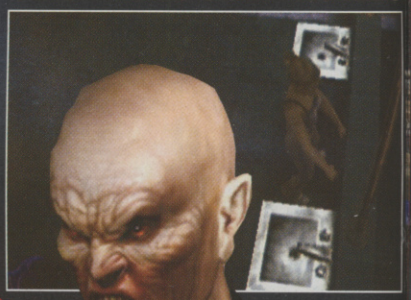
Reaper Wing: This razor-sharp blade acts as a deadly boomerang. Takes a while to come back though

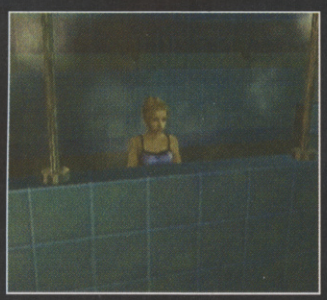


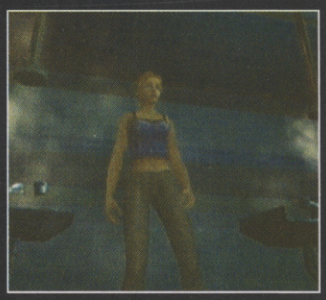


Water Gun: It may look like a kiddy's toy, but get in its way and you're toast!

SEE-THROUGH WALLS







The transparency effect works like a charm. As well as enabling you to keep focused on combat without having to think about moving the camera, this cool touch means that it's easy to keep an eye on Buffy's sexy figure

The environments are beautifully atmospheric, packed with striking details, and locations are faithful to the TV show. Plus, there are some great eerie lighting and fog effects. But best of all, the developers use a subtle transparency effect that means objects in the foreground never obscure the action.

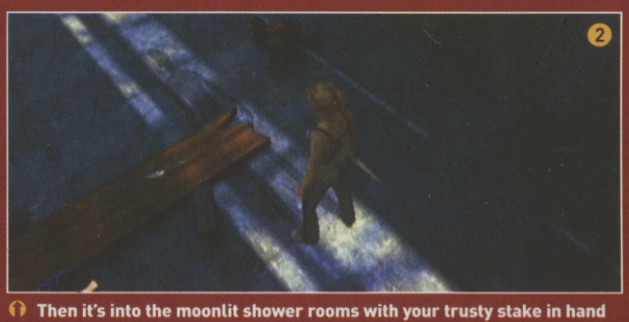
It may be geeky to point out, but this small technical touch spares you the infuriating task of fiddling with the camera when you're caught in a tight spot, keeping the action flowing smoothly in every situation.

SUNNYDALE SLUGFEST

The famous and familiar interiors of Sunnydale High School are the setting of the first stage, and where the real adventure begins. Once you've completed your training, you find yourself on the basketball court, faced with the mission of clearing the school of vamps. And as you work your way through the level, you'll have vicious brawls in locker-lined corridors, heated confrontations with fire-hurling demons, and a no-holds-barred scrap in a steamy shower room. There's a brawl to be had around every corner and there's no backing out, so in the famous words of Tyler Durden, "You have to fight!"

Some evil scumbag has written the words 'DIE SLAYER' on the blackboard...

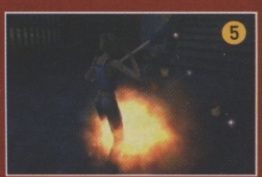
The mission begins on the b-ball court, where it's calm but spooky



Then it's into the moonlit shower rooms with your trusty stake in hand

Dispose of the creature with power-packed moves

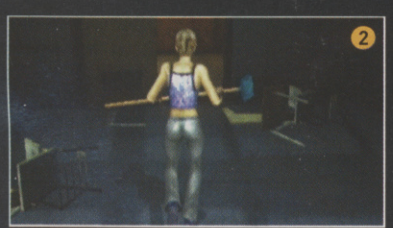
There are more battles in the corridors. Use the mop!



Before the next level you have to overcome a test of fire

CRAZY IN THE CLASSROOM

Do you, or did you hate school? Well if so, you'll love this! Go into the classroom in Sunnydale High School, select any weapon (we recommend the mop), then go ballistic and unleash all your angst in a riotous act of mindless vandalism, demolishing desks and crushing chairs. Throughout your adventure you'll come across a fair few objects like these that you can bust to pieces, some of which will reveal hidden treats. So if you see something that looks breakable give it a good whack. If only you could do that in everyday life, eh?



There's your excuse for losing your rag and going mental with the mop

Swing like a loony, and let the anger flow. Better out than in, children

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

As you get further into the adventure, you'll find yourself clashing in a mad battle with Angel, stuck in an eerie bug-infested maze, being chased and stabbed by giant spike-wielding bad guys, surrounded by gangs of burly evil creatures, leaping over lava-filled crevasses, and going head-to-head with The Master. But don't panic because you've got your fists, feet, a mop and a water gun to banish the evil critters with! Only kidding... sometimes you've only got your fists and feet. Ahhh!

Angel's been possessed so show him who's boss

Get caught in a massive fight with a gang of enemies

Fight back with your sharp boomerang

Pump holy water all over The Master's face

FULLY HANDS-ON SNEAK-PEEK OF THE LATEST AND HOTTEST GAMES

PREVIEWS

JET SET RADIO FUTURE

FORMAT: **XBOX** OUT: **MARCH 14** DEVELOPER: **SEGA/SMILE BIT** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**

Even by Dreamcast standards, Jet Set Radio was a bit of a flop. It had all the ingredients of a game set to do the business – innovative graphics, a large dose of street style and a fantastic soundtrack.

But Sega's marketing machine rarely got out of first gear, and people tend not to buy things they've never heard of. So while only a select few got to experience one of the handful of genuinely original games of recent years, it's up to the Xbox sequel to bring the vibe to the masses.

GET THE COOL SHOESHINE

The theme is simple. Take control of the members of the hard-done-by GG gang, and attempt to claim the streets of future Tokyo for yourself by whizzing about on rocket-powered inline skates, collecting cans of paint and spraying graffiti everywhere. You have rival skating teams like Rapid 99 and Noise Tank to contend with, as well as Officer Hiyashi and the sinister Rokkaku private

You need wallrides to link long chains of combos

Detail? There are even flocks of crows to pester

Some levels look really dirty. Brighten 'em up with some graffiti

Neon-soaked 99th Street is home

GANG WAR

JSR on Dreamcast was a solo experience. Future adds multiplayer modes for up to four gamers, with plain Versus action for all-out tagging and fragging, and even team play for a more tactical battle.

Combo kicks Yoyo's ass in a two-player tag battle

Four-player racing is fun because you get weapons, but it's a bit slow-paced

Embarrass your friends by being better at vandalism than them

Try to combo during grinds

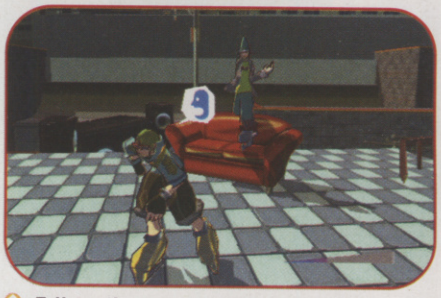
All is quiet but wait until the tanks roll in...

police force. So expect tanks and robots to chase after you, as well as irate gang members.

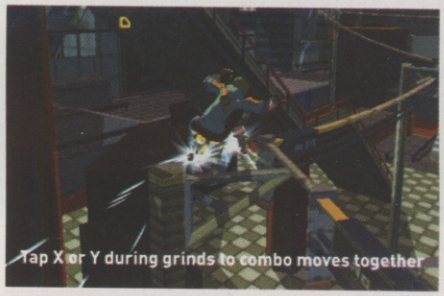
Yeah, you've all seen JSR Future's cel-shaded cartoon-style graphics a zillion times over the last year, but Jet Set Radio pioneered the technique, so it's justified in using it again. And it uses it properly, so you don't have the blocky mess found in games such as DNA. Each screenshot on these pages looks like a single animation cel, but in motion it's utterly fluid and convincing, with bold outlines around everything and flat shadows that play over characters and objects without a glitch.

The effect is taken to new heights on Xbox, with comic-book black speed lines radiating from your character when they're really shifting and a blur that smears colour all over the screen when you grind. Top of the pile is the speed boost effect that renders the entire image in scratchy, melting crayon-vision.

You can grind off just about anything vaguely rail-shaped in the game, including vertical lamp posts, and you can wallride on ad hoardings and pull multiple stunts in mid-air to get massive combos going. The result is that JSRF can be played at a breakneck pace, and the way you

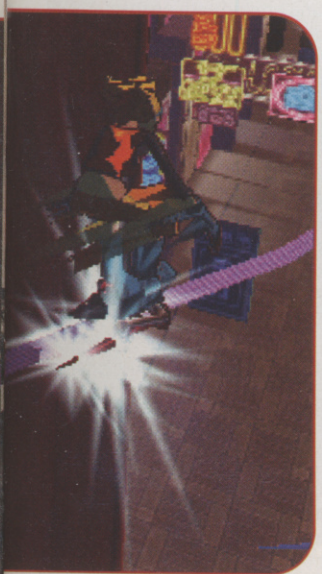


Talk to other gang members for clues



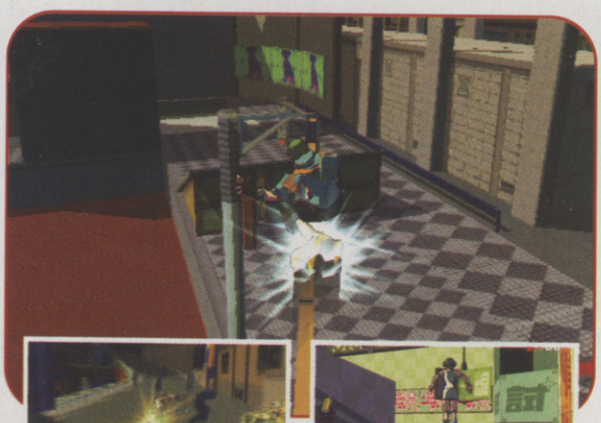
Tap X or Y during grinds to combo moves together

"Tagging the town at breakneck speed – cool!"



to the Rapid 99 gang

You can grind off almost anything – if you've got the skills



News flash: girl with arse on fire frightens locals

Puny shoppers! They don't suspect a thing! Hahahaha!

spray graffiti tags has been tweaked to reflect this. If you're familiar with the Dreamcast version, you'll know that spraying graffiti required thumb-snapping moves on the analog stick. Now you simply have to hold down the Xbox pad's right trigger as you fly past the hot spots on each level. To regulate your speed and get an entire tag out in one pass, pressing in the left analog stick sends you into a kind of braking move that sprays out showers of sparks.

SPRAY YOUR MATES

A welcome addition to the Jet Set mix is a selection of multiplayer options. With the screen split up to four ways, you'll be able to see who's the best tagger in racing and battle sub-games. Mario Kart-style power-ups will ensure the scrap for that last can of spray paint gets as vicious as an all-out Quake deathmatch.

The streets of Tokyo are alive with colour and movement in Jet Set Radio Future. Traffic bustles around the Shibuya Terminal bus station, and drunks and tramps hang out in the less affluent areas. Everything responds to your

The streets look quiet. Better find some stuff to paint up

Collect spray cans and bash innocent pedestrians out the way

This looks like a good spot to, er, express our artistic freedom

Speed lines make JSRF look very much like a comic book

GOT THE MAD SKILLS

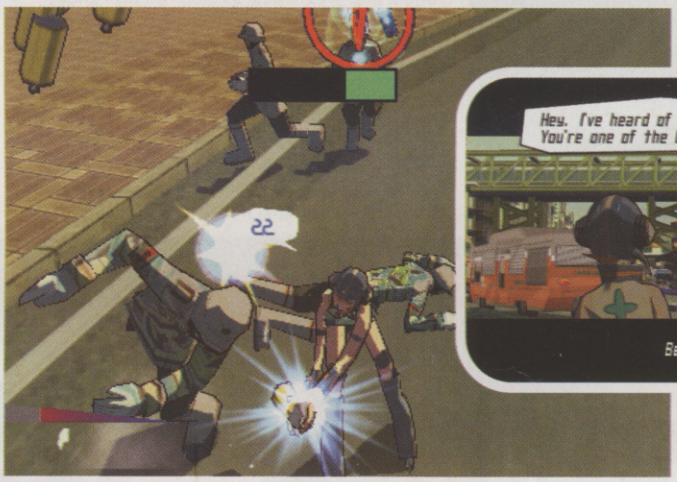
Jet Set Radio Future is possibly one of the most stylish games your eyes will ever have the pleasure of witnessing. It's most impressive when there's a decent player at the controls: that is one who can link together jumps, grinds and wall rides into an all-tagging combo overload that's almost too fast to keep up with. Better take our advice and start re-wiring your brain right now.

Some tags are massive and wrap round whole buildings

And the boost effect makes it look like modern art

skating antics, and it's cool to see clouds of old newspaper and shop signs spinning in your wake as you blast through a shopping mall at unwise speeds. The game is set in the future, but there are crazy retro buses tooling about, and the whole thing has a kind of 1960s comic-book sci-fi look to it.

Levels are significantly bigger than those in the original JSR, and tagging missions are often broken up by rude interruptions from the police's latest invention, or a challenge to a race by a rival gang. The city is laid out like, well, a real city, with the GG's home garage at the centre and the rest of the districts



Seems all the kids in Tokyo want to join the GGs

Beat up cops while you're at it. JSRF isn't a menace to society, oh no...

Probably not the best place to park a train...

This level is loosely based on a real bus station in Tokyo

Staying in control during a speed boost is tricky

The GG gang dance whenever they're left alone

interconnected around it. So, if you don't have a mission to do, you can just mess about collecting the bonus items carefully hidden in each level by skating around with no map screens to worry about.

Jet Set Radio on Dreamcast was one of the coolest-looking games ever created. Xbox is the least sexy use of black plastic we can remember. Logic dictates a conjunction of these two opposing forces should result in a universe-destroying anti-matter explosion. But instead, the awesome power under the 'Box's ugly skin has made Jet Set Radio Future the genuine massive improvement that all sequels aspire to be. Now all that remains to be seen is whether people can be persuaded to buy it.

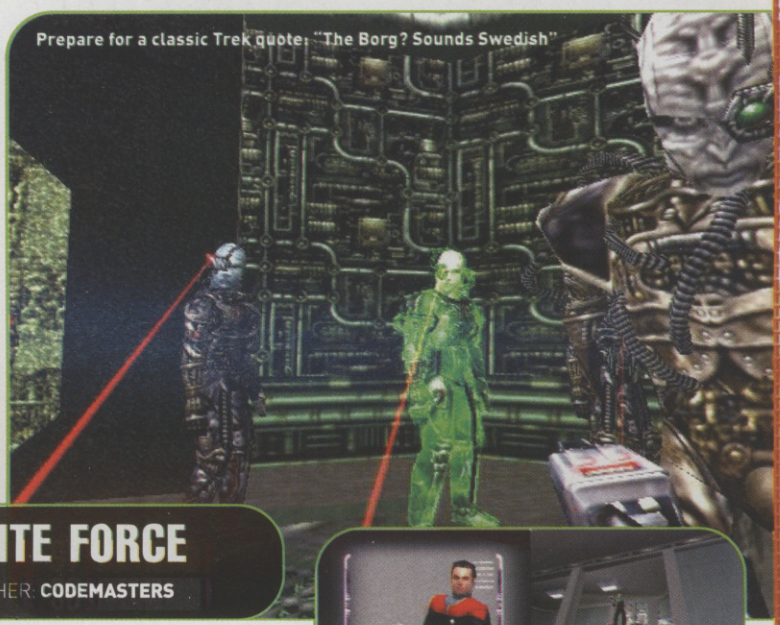
CVG RECKONS

Cool, vibrant and playable. Deserves to be massive, but the non-success of the DC version doesn't bode well. **Steve**

"Gleeful Trek fans may eject their warp cores"

Team members offer advice and help during missions

Prepare for a classic Trek quote: "The Borg? Sounds Swedish"



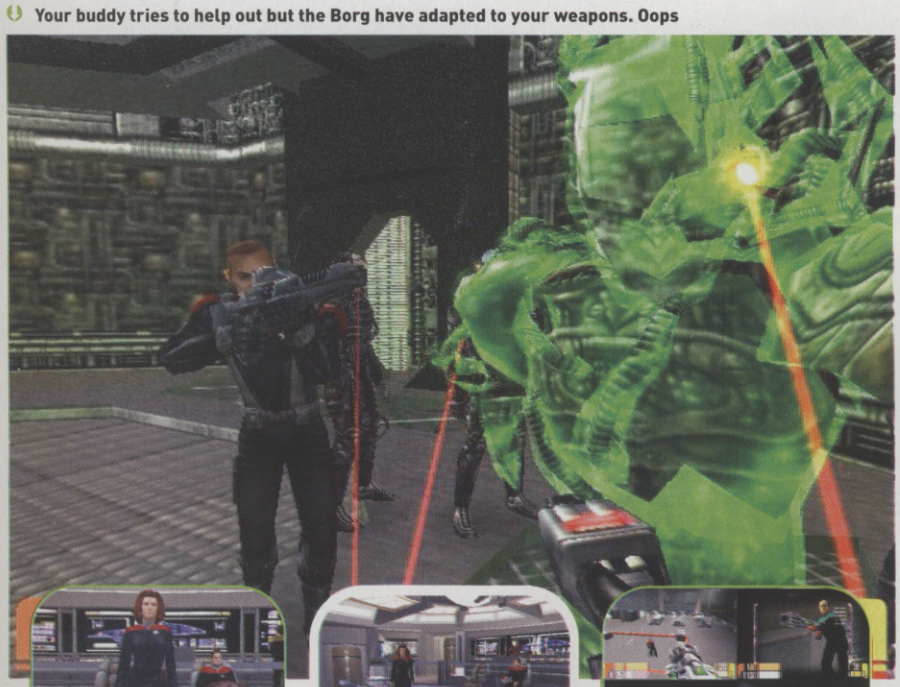
STAR TREK: VOYAGER – ELITE FORCE

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **MAJESCO** PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**

There was heated debate at the last bi-monthly meeting of the CVG Star Trek Appreciation Society. The Klingon Bloodwine (lemonade with black food colouring) flowed and thoughts soon turned to the perfect PS2 Star Trek game. After much arguing, it was decided it should let you explore an entire starship, and order Vulcan Plomeek Soup from food replicators. You'd even be able to take part in one of Captain Picard's 'Private Dick' holodeck programs! Wouldn't sell, though. Lucky, then, that Elite Force is a ferocious, action-packed first-person shooter that'll get every hot-blooded gamer's heart pumping.

Four-player deathmatch joy. You'll love it

Your buddy tries to help out but the Borg have adapted to your weapons. Oops



It's Janeway and Paris in their full PS2 beauty!

The attention to detail in the ship's surroundings is first class

Deathmatch arenas – in the holodeck and on multiple levels

EPISODE OVERLOAD

While Trekkers may not be particularly happy about Elite Force's unorthodox frag-happy approach to Star Trek, the average Joe will lap up the story-led blasting action. And although it's a conversion of the PC game that almost made Star Trek cool, Elite Force looks just as at home on the PS2 and the transition from geek machine to console has been as smooth as Picard's shiny bald bonce.

It plays out like one giant episode of the Voyager series. The first level is a stylish pre-credits scene-setter and subsequent levels are strung together by cutscenes featuring the real voices of the Voyager crew. It's true to the Trek universe without being too geeky or overloaded with techno-babble.

What's more, there are stacks of multiplayer games, including four-player deathmatches. The gameplay feels so solid that even if you hate all things Trek, this is an intense action hit.

CVG RECKONS

It's the best Trek game there is, and you don't need a meaty expensive PC to play it. 'Kaplah!', as the Klingons say. **Lee**

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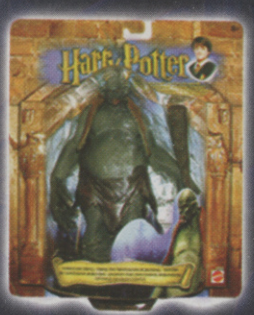

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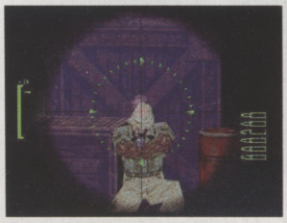
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE - GOLD

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **PIPEDREAM INTERACTIVE/CODEMASTERS** PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**

A grenade bounces round the corner, blowing a man's leg off. That'll slow him down. Then you burst through a door, shotgun cocked, to remove his arms, before pulling out your Desert Eagle to decapitate him with one shot to the face. Nasty, but SoFG is attempting to bring the experience of being a highly paid mercenary (or gun-toting psychopath, depending on how you look at it) to PS2, in the hope that all the gore and realism will disguise the fact that this is the latest in a long line of obvious PC ports.

Two targets gone in one blast



Sniper rifle to the head. Classy

The no-gore option will be the least used option in a game ever

GORE SCORE

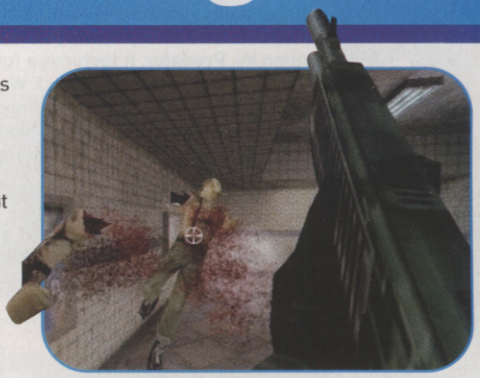
As far as first-person shooters go, SoFG is a kick in the nuts compared to Deus X's cerebral thinking experience. Despite 'sensitive' marketing, don't be fooled into thinking that this has been in any way toned down. SoFG has more gore in any given scene than in the likes of Silent Hill 2 and Resident Evil put together. Once you start letting loose with the realistic weapons you'll have body parts flying and rooms decorated a subtle shade of claret in no time.

Seeing as the emphasis is on realism, you can't just cane it through a level blasting away like a lunatic. You need to constantly think about where you're going and what weapons you're using. This leads to amusing sub-games, like sneaking up on a thug and seeing if you can remove all four limbs and the head before the torso hits the floor.

Multiplayer is still being worked on, but Codemasters is aiming for 40 maps and countless game modes. But, because the emphasis is still on realism, it may not end up as fun as Half-Life or Quake 3.

"Gun fun soaked in lashings of realistic gore"

Peppering his whole body will stop him getting up

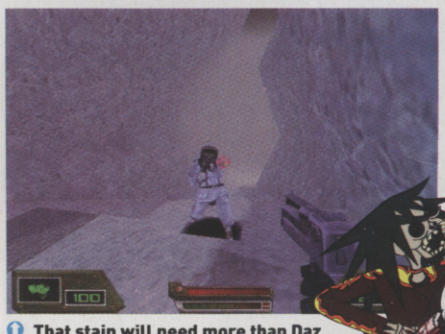


Sorry? You wanted anaesthetic with that?

Lotsa blood and missing limbs. Another successful day at the office

Pump lead into the bodies and they twitch

Careful, the whole place will go up

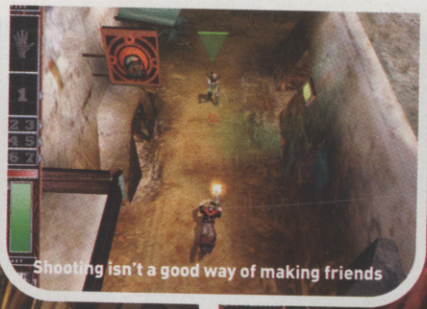


That stain will need more than Daz

CVG RECKONS

The blood, realism and relentless action should appeal to much the same type of psycho gamer who played it on PC. **Les**

Damn, not one of these is a Craftmatic adjustable bed

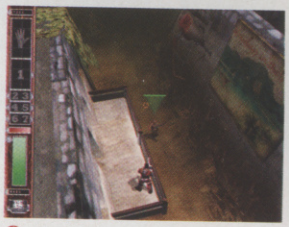


Shooting isn't a good way of making friends

Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen's interior designs didn't always go down well

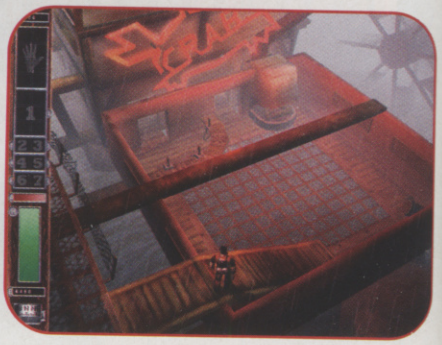
"2000 AD meets Baldur's Gate, but wot no Dredd?"

Jack Wardog is da bomb. No, in fact he is a bomb, a walking time bomb, literally. Coming hot from the pages of the cult comic book franchise 2000 AD and onto a small screen near you this autumn, Wardog is a role-player from Rebellion, which brought you Alien Vs. Predator. It features a futuristic world in which slaves like Jack Wardog are forced to carry out deadly missions for their masters using time bombs in their heads. This is one headache Anadin isn't going to cure.



Use high ground to your advantage. It makes life easier

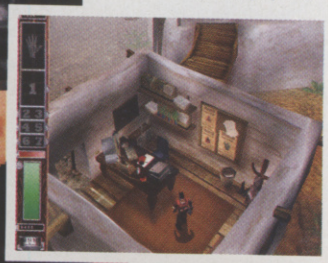
Time to relax in the crab bar. Hopefully that describes the food, not the hygiene of the people



WARDOG

FORMAT: PC OUT: AUTUMN 2002 DEVELOPER: REBELLION PUBLISHER: TBA

AI is something special



Damn – all these inventory slots and not one umbrella

JACK – WHO HE?

Unfortunately, Jack has no recollection of who he really is, his past, or who planted the bomb in his bonce. It's your job to assume the roll of Jack and guide him through the 3D cyberpunk-style world, completing missions to gain experience and strength, while uncovering the secrets of his true identity and, importantly, just who has their finger on his countdown button.

But this RPG won't be one of those 20-sided dice, beards and bastard swords affairs. Instead, Rebellion is taking great pains to make the 3D isometric gaming world as accessible and absorbing as possible (think Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance). The AI in particular looks like being the strongest and most sophisticated feature of the game, and characters will be as 'alive' as it is possible to get without major leaps forward in hardware.

Each character will have its own opinion of Wardog himself, which will change according to the actions you perform. Give the impression that you're going to cause trouble and they'll run off to get their mates or a bigger gun .

It's not only the AI in Wardog that looks like being something special either. Rebellion has enlisted the talents of some of the 2000 AD writers of the Wardog comic strip to give the game a storyline that will stand out as much as the graphics and technology we've seen so far. Sounds like a pretty good package.

Before you pillage his corpse, deal with his mates

CVG RECKONS

Superb AI and storyline – Wardog might not just be the mutt's nuts, it could be the rest of the dog as well. **Rhianna**

STAR WARS OBI-WAN

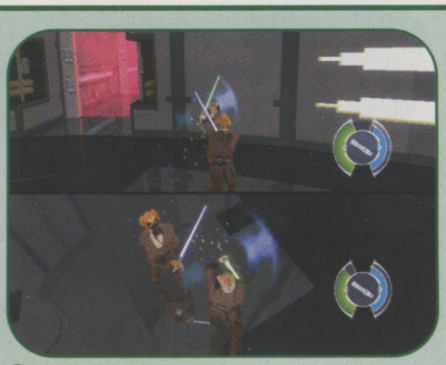
FORMAT: **XBOX** OUT: **MARCH 14** DEVELOPER: **LUCASARTS** PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**

If the tunic and boots ensemble doesn't do it for you, then the pony tail/mullet combo surely will. Yes, you too can become the most fashionable Jedi in Coruscant when you step into Obi-Wan's pointy shoes.

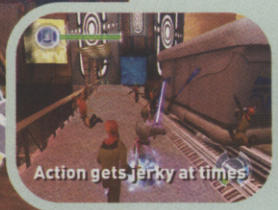
Or perhaps not. Obi-Wan has had a chequered development history, starting out life as PC FPS adventure before being reincarnated as Xbox's Star Wars new hope. But like a bucket of sick tied to a diseased dog's tail, there's a troublesome stink following Obi-Wan around wherever it goes.

The shadows on Obi-Wan's tunic are weird

Levels are huge with no pop-up or fogging



Multiplayer might help make it more fun



You can speak to NPCs such as this bum-head, but they rarely say anything useful

After playing the final US version, the biggest problem with Obi-Wan is that it simply isn't much fun at all. You may be a Jedi with a light saber and the ability to manipulate your environment with your Force powers, but exploration is dull, combat is lame and level layout uninspired. We need to play it more to be sure, but going by what we've seen so far, none of us wants to. And that doesn't bode well at all.

CVG RECKONS

It'll be average at best, downright dreadful at worst. Don't buy it until we review it. **Lee**

While EA relies on realism and boxing legends to keep Knockout Kings fighting fit (see page 45), Codemasters believes innovation and the meaty fists of the self-styled baddest man on the planet are the killer blow that's needed to be the undisputed king of the ring on PS2.

FISTING FURY

Although slapping the crap out of your opponent is the overall aim of the game, Tyson almost feels like two games in one. Exhibition matches are fast and easy to pick up. You take one of 16 recognisable fighters through straightforward championship bouts or pit them against an array of opponents and the clock to better your previous KO record – if your right hook's up to it.

But it's the Custom Fighter mode that's taking our fancy. You start off choosing your killer brute and his appearance before training him up to eventually become the heavyweight champion of the world. But rather than developing your slugger's skills through tedious sessions in the gym, you can learn signature moves from every opponent you defeat. Therefore your library of attacks and combos increases with every fight, until you're a fist king with faster feet and slicker combos than Mohammed Ali in his prime.

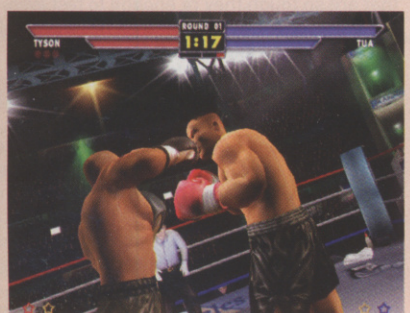
Use dirty tricks if you want

Stars show your combo limit

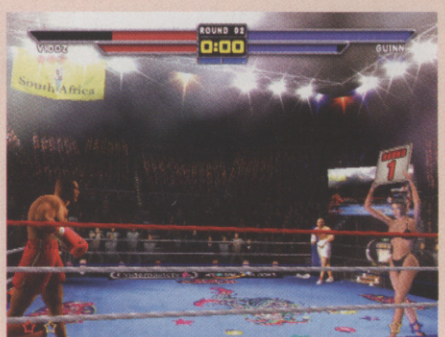
Beat Tyson to learn his moves

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

FORMAT: **PS2/XBOX** OUT: **APRIL** DEVELOPER: **ATOMIC PLANET** PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**



Tyson's dental surgery opens for business



An important part of boxing – the ring girls

But if you just can't cut it in the ring, cheat. Providing the ref doesn't catch a glimpse of your underhand tactics, it's possible to hit below the belt, throw in an elbow and even headbutt your opponent smack on the nose. In fact the only dirty trick that's been left out is Tyson's trademark ear/leg bites, because the big man didn't want it to appear in his game. Hmm, wonder why that is?

CVG RECKONS

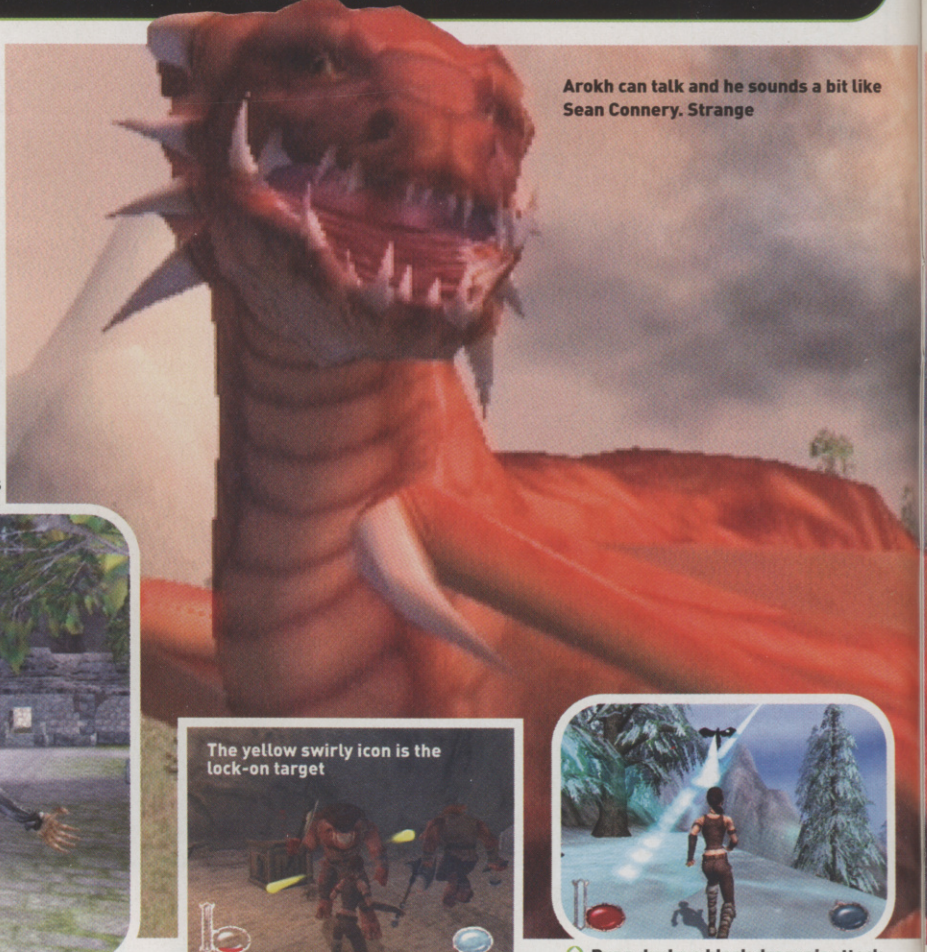
With its mixture of hard-hitting action and longevity, Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing may well have the edge over Knockout Kings. **Les**

DRAKAN: THE ANCIENTS' GATES

FORMAT: PS2 OUT: MARCH DEVELOPER: SURREAL SOFTWARE PUBLISHER: SONY

Dragons rule. Their vicious claws, their ability to strike fear into the hearts of even the bravest warrior and their fiery burps make them the perfect pet for those who want more entertainment than the average cocker spaniel can provide. And for the lucky few who get to tame and command one of these mythical beasts, there's always the added bonus of having a portable muffin toaster to accompany them on journeys across the land.

The lovely, curvaceous Rynn is one such dragon-fancier. Her pet fire-breather is called Arokh, and despite being a menace to everyone else in the world of Drakan, Rynn and the beast are best mates and trade insults like old war heroes. It's your job to help Rynn explore the vast game world in a search for the four gates of the Ancients. Only by seeking out these long-hidden and mystical portals can you hope to tackle the evil forces sweeping the land.



Arokh can talk and he sounds a bit like Sean Connery. Strange

Here's the pervy Desert Lord, one the many bad guys

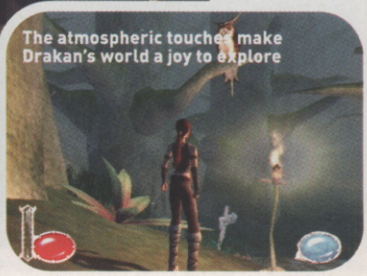
The yellow swirly icon is the lock-on target

Rynn ducks a black dragon's attack

"Two tons of angry dragon between your legs – Ow!"

The stupidly named Gothraul sports the classic bad-guy beard

Drakan – the only game where you can find kilt-wearing goblins



The atmospheric touches make Drakan's world a joy to explore

I'M THROBIN, SON OF KNOBIN

Like the very best fantasy adventures, Drakan's plot is full of unpronounceable names you spray rather than say, plus orcs and trolls that are so tough they're enough to test even the most ardent role-playing game fan's resolve. Luckily, it looks like there'll be more than enough high-octane hacking and slashing in there too, which should appeal to action-heads.

In fact, Drakan plays like a cross between Tomb Raider and Legend Of Zelda, with a little bit of beardy-weirdy role-players like Baldur's Gate thrown in for good measure. The action is viewed from behind Rynn's pert buns and each of the game's mammoth quests and sub-quests plays out in sprawling action sequences in which the buxom ball-buster must take out hordes of scaly villains while negotiating tricky jumps and clever puzzles.

Drakan's early stone cities and towns give

MOUNT YOUR BEAST

We reckon Rynn must get through pots of thigh ointment to tackle the chaffing that comes from straddling her scaly pal Arokh. After the opening section, you can call Arokh whenever you're outside by pressing L1. The lizard will swoosh majestically down from the sky and ready itself to be mounted. You'll get top-notch firepower and the ability to fly to all-new areas.

Rynn can ride Arokh and crush enemies

Keep warm with dragon heating

Arokh's impressive wingspan fills the screen

Shoot balls of fire or a continuous blast

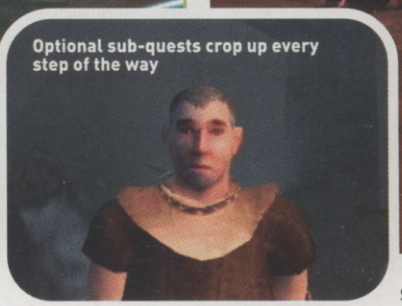
Mind the tree! You can't toast scenery

Repair and buy new gear as you need it at the handy blacksmith's shop

The aerial dogfights are better than ZOE's

Rynn's curvaceous breasts are independently sprung – s'true!

Electricity and water clearly don't mix that well... See what happens if you don't listen in Physics lessons



Optional sub-quests crop up every step of the way

Rynn and Arokh share a 'special bond'. Sounds a teensy bit dodgy to us

way to menacing forests and gloom-drenched caverns later in the game, and each environment brings its own challenges. Man-made traps, natural hazards and rock-hard enemies are all awaiting hapless adventurers, but the rewards for successfully completing each quest and sub-quest are massive.

TAKE TO THE SKIES

What seems most promising about Drakan is the level of depth the game offers. There are all manner of weapons and armour to discover – try them out and their different properties will be revealed. The number of devastating spells that need learning would put even Gandalf to shame, and the way the game explodes before your eyes on the TV screen the first time you mount Arokh and take to the skies is one of those moments of pure videogaming joy.

So Drakan is sure to stand out on PS2. The traditional RPG setting might not excite you at first, but the game is packed with an astonishing level of detail, ever more engaging gameplay and the structure of the game is perfectly balanced. Drakan could just turn out to be the closest thing to Zelda PS2 has seen yet.

CVG RECKONS

It doesn't quite have the graphical finesse of Final Fantasy, but it's got a lot more action *and* you do get to ride a dragon. Very promising indeed. **Lee**

Samanosuke readies his sword for a harsh strike

Here's Princess Yuki before she gets kidnapped

Knock down enemies then impale 'em so they die

GENMA ONIMUSHA

FORMAT: **XBOX** OUT: **MARCH 14** DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM** PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**

It's March 14, 2002. You're standing at the counter in your local games shop, rocking excitedly from one leg to the other. You've saved for ages and ages to get your hands on a copy of a reworked and revamped version of Onimusha for your shiny new Xbox. Palms itching, you hand over your 45 squids. In return, the spotty sales assistant hands you a tatty lasso.

"Here's your Genma Onimusha, sir," says the assistant. Confused, you look from the threadbare lasso to the assistant and back again. "Is there a problem, sir?" he asks. "Yes, there's a problem," you reply. " I've just paid you good money for old rope." Do you see?

Pre-rendered scenes were once cool. Once

SHORT STUFF

The original Onimusha is a fine game, no question about it. The PlayStation 2 adventure is a short but intense action hit. It's not exactly what you'd call next-gen, but what it does, it does with style. Genma Onimusha is that same non-next-gen PS2 game presented on Xbox with the addition of just a couple of fun but non-essential gameplay tweaks.

It already looks and feels old-fashioned. Gamers are so used to seeing full 3D environments now that the game's flat, pre-rendered backdrops look horribly blocky and lack any real sense of depth. Worse, the control system has been lifted straight from the very first Resident Evil game. The PS2 game had the same problems, but Onimusha was one of the first action games available for the system, so it was less of an issue. On the super-powerful, shiny new Xbox the whole experience just feels dated.

That said, the new additions to the gameplay are a good attempt at breathing new life into the game. Playing tug-of-war with demons for precious green souls, for more power and life, is satisfying when you win, frustrating when you lose. The added challenge from the increased difficulty level is welcome too, but compared to the graphical splendour of Halo and the depth of puzzles offered by Munch, we wonder if Onimusha can still cut it.

"It's good but it's nothing you can't get on PS2"

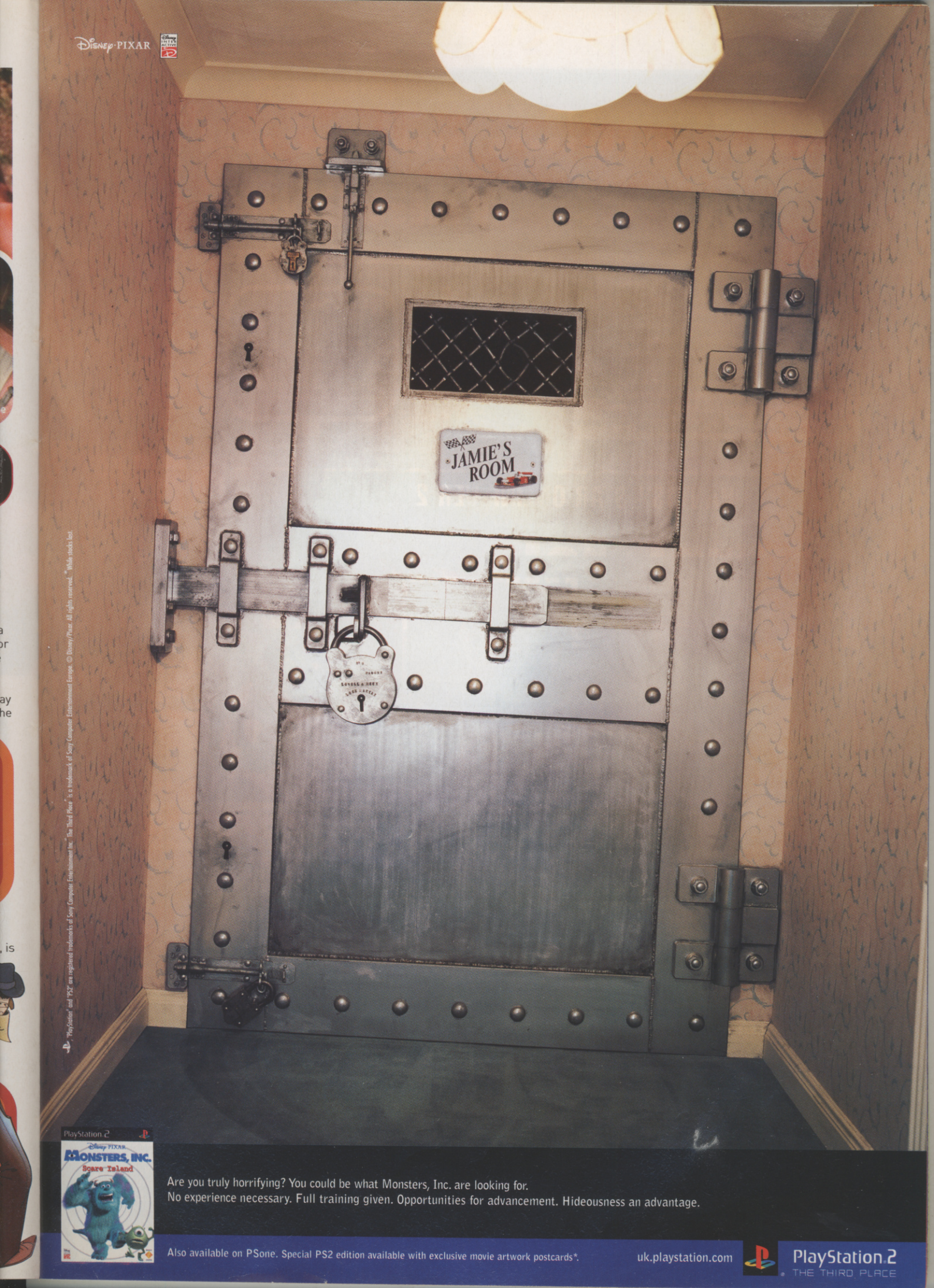
The great Samanosuke has the ability to guard against attacks – which can prove dead useful, as you will soon realise

Will you go down? Of course!

Suck them before the bad guys do

CVG RECKONS

A good game, but we doubt that it's going to show off the power of your Xbox in any way. **Lee**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"Dreamcast could have no better swansong"

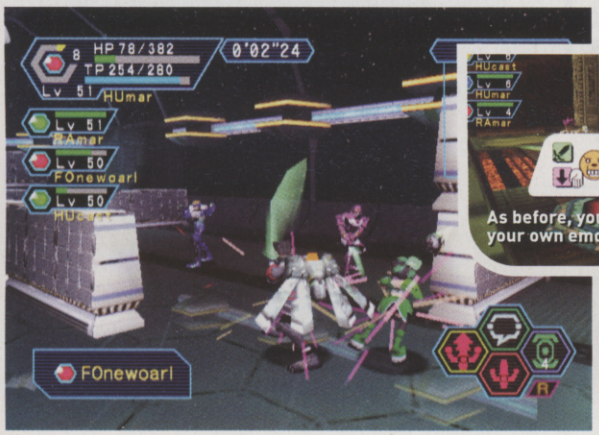
It may not be a 'proper' sequel, but the amount of extras and new play modes that Phantasy Star Online ver 2 gives you almost makes up for it. This updated PSO retains all the wonder of the first game including, you'll be pleased to learn, the incredible universal translator. It adds to these delights further by giving players exciting new weapons, fresh armours and new items to play around with and trade online. There are new sub-quests, sexy new character abilities, and frightening new enemies. But the most exciting features are the ne'er-before-seen Battle and Challenge games.

Countdown to beam-down – it's all very stylish

Solve puzzles and progress through the story

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE VER 2

FORMAT: **DC** OUT: **MARCH 1** DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM** PUBLISHER: **SEGA**



Designated deathmatch arenas are a recipe for total carnage

Fights are just as exciting – you won't find any turn-based nonsense here

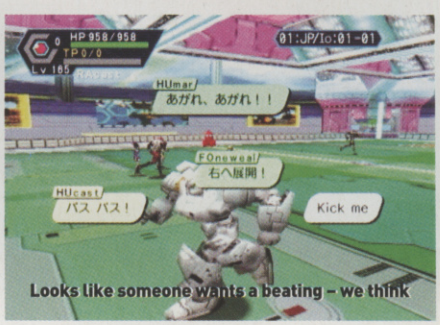
BATTLE SIR? OOH!

The Challenge mode gives you and three online team-mates specific parameters in which to complete isolated sections of the main game. You could all be forced to fight from level 1, say, or with just magic, or with only close-combat weapons. It's tough, but it rewards the PSO veteran. The Battle mode is much more exciting and finally lets you fight against each other online, rather than questing co-operatively.

There are loads of different deathmatch arenas to play in, and loads of different game types to match them. There are most-kills-wins fights, or battles to see who can score the most

The caverns will leave you in lava-like doodoo

"Nice legs love, shame about the stupid hat"



Looks like someone wants a beating – we think

money. It's the perfect antidote to all that friendly online adventuring in the main quest.

PLAY FOR FREE, ALMOST

The one and only beeyatch about the first PSO game was that playing online cost a mint. Now that Sega's Dreamarena portal lets you choose your own ISP, even more people will be tempted. How much you'll pay depends on the ISP you're using but it's bound to work out cheaper than the per-minute charges of old. And get this: everywhere else in the world, PSO players have to pay a monthly subs charge, called a Hunter's License, just to play. Us lucky Europeans get it all for gratis. Sega, we kiss your dying lips.

CVG RECKONS

No monthly fee and no more per-minute Net call charges free up PSO ver 2 for everyone to enjoy, no excuses. Worth buying a £70 DC for? You bet. Lee

STAR WARS JEDI STARFIGHTER

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **SPRING** DEVELOPER: **LUCASARTS** PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**

As a rule, if Star Wars games based on the movies were people then they would be living proof that care in the community programmes don't work. They promise so much but instead usually just end up filling our homes with dribbling shells, exhibiting only vague signs of life.

Episode I was the prime example. One of the biggest ever movie licences created some appalling games, like Phantom Menace, Super Bombad Racing and Jedi Power Battles. But at least it spawned one or two games with potential too, such as Racer and Starfighter.

AGE OF BATTLEGROUNDS

LucasArts doesn't need a new Star Wars movie to be able to continue churning out games set in that universe (take Age Of Empires – sorry, Galactic Battlegrounds). But now it's preparing us for a new batch of games more or less based on the upcoming Episode II instalment. And, while PC freaks have only just got a version of the original Starfighter, Sony's black box is about to acquire a semi-sequel.

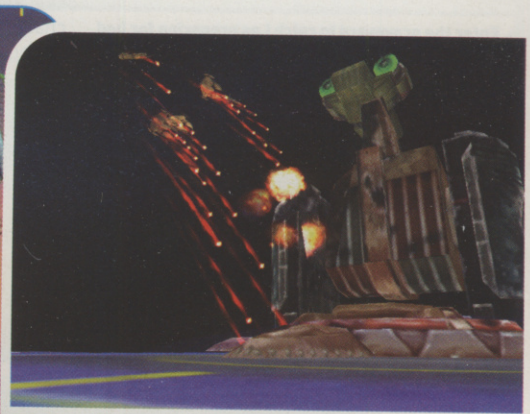
Jedi Starfighter sees you flying through 15 levels (including some lifted directly from the movie) in new ships also debuting in the film. Only this time you have more than just weapons to use; being a fully fledged Jedi, you possess Force powers that you can use on other ships. Force Lightning knocks out enemy pilots and drains their ships of energy, while Force Reflex does a bit of a Matrix and puts the game into slo-mo except, luckily, for your ship.

As well as a one-player plot cutting in and out of that of the movie, you have a two-player co-op mode introducing new characters and ships like the Zoomer and Freefall craft in some *huuuuge* battles. LucasArts is even tarting up the old Starfighter engine so that it looks better than ever, with more effects and explosions. Let's just hope that not too much of the slushy stuff, evident in the trailer of the movie, is included.

Here's new character Reti showing off his Zoomer ship

"Mesa people gonna die? Oh yes, Jar Jar"

Oh, the embarrassment. Blown up by a Jar Jar Binks lookalike. My reputation's in tatters



Travel through the galaxy, meet lots of exciting people – and then drop bombs on them

You need to battle the Sabaoth Squadron

You even get to see Episode II ships

CVG RECKONS

The prospect that this could be out before the film in May means Star Wars fans will buy it anyway, just to see the new ships. Les

"The love-child of Final Fantasy and Parasite Eve"

SHADOWHEARTS

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **MARCH** DEVELOPER: **AZURE CROP** PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**

You thought Resident Evil had the monopoly on gore? Think again. Before you even complete the opening sequence of Shadowhearts you'll have had a close-up view of limbs being ripped off and someone punching clean through one poor sod's face, ripping out an eye along the way. Yum.

Just the sort of thing to sate the bloodlust of gamers around the globe, you'd think. So we're a touch surprised that Shadowhearts, which was released in Japan last summer, has only just been snapped up for a UK release, especially given that this is a game with more pedigree than a five-times Crufts champion. "How so?", you may be wondering. Well, the team behind it formerly worked at Square, so you can be sure Azure knows a thing or two about making killer role-players.

Although all the gore may make it seem more Final Destination than Final Fantasy, the influences are clear right from the start. The locations are also more real world than the FF series, but it won't be long before you see the familiar swoosh as the screen dissolves and you walk into the first of many random battles.

This is where the subtle differences start to creep in. Select a normal attack and there's a skill-testing mini-game where you have the chance to increase your attack stats by timing button presses to stop a spinning gauge three times. As well as these normal attacks and some spectacular magic ones, you get a Fusion option where you can take the form of creatures you have killed before, using their attacks and magic. All of which makes the combat less repetitive than in the FF games.

SPIT ON THAT GRAVE

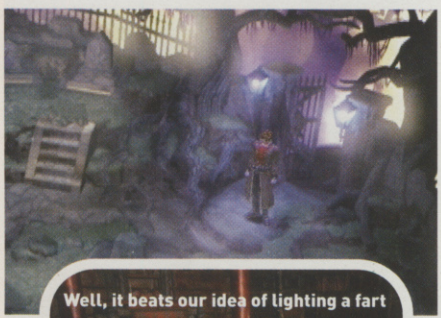
The story, which sees you running all over the world in search of a kidnapped girl, with the power to destroy the planet, is told in more than 90 hours of gameplay. The locations are huge, including a graveyard where you must defeat monsters you've fought before to finally dispatch them back to hell.

And the good news is that it feels not unlike you're playing a slightly faster-paced and more realistic version of Final Fantasy, with a hell of a lot more gore splashed around. Keep a close eye on this one.

Yes, you can call the characters anything you want

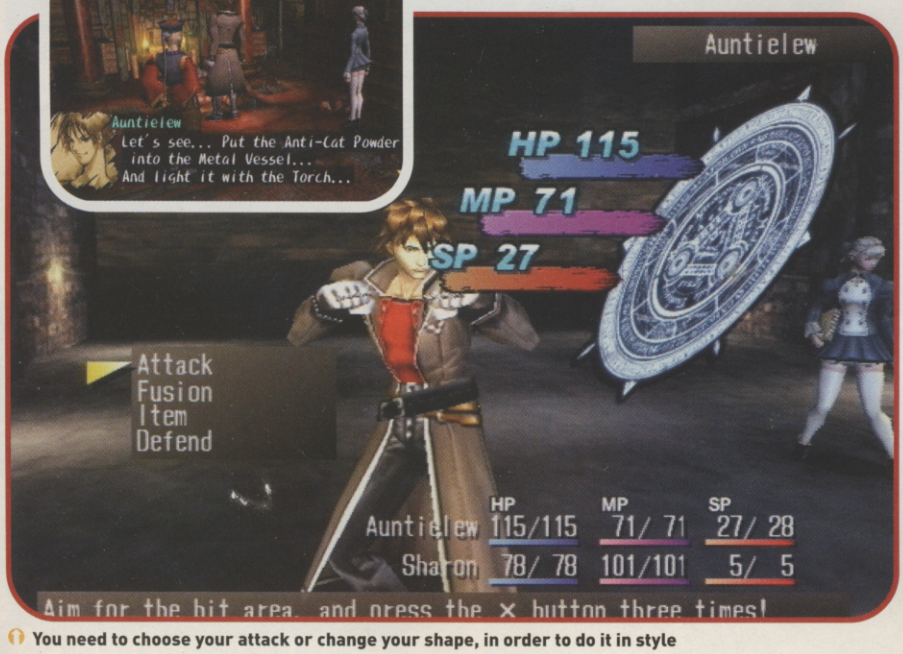
Stop the green line near to the red zones for extra hits

Enter the graveyard to catch Les preparing for bed



Watch it, that's *Mr* Bastard to you, punk

Arghh! He's got no strides on; my eyes, my eyes!



You need to choose your attack or change your shape, in order to do it in style

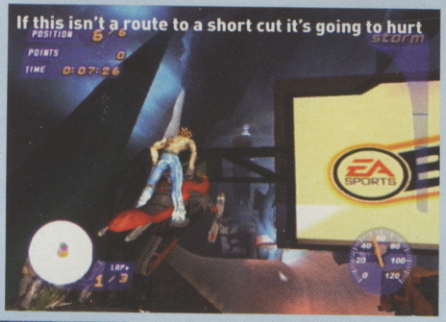
CVG RECKONS

Shadowhearts emerges from nowhere and has us chomping at the bit for the finished version. Les

SLED STORM

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **MARCH** DEVELOPER: **EA CANADA** PUBLISHER: **EA**

What's the most fun you can have with snow? Throwing snowballs at your mates made from that special yellow snow dog leaves behind... with rocks inside them? Bombing down a ski slope out of control, waiting for a tree to appear so you can stop?

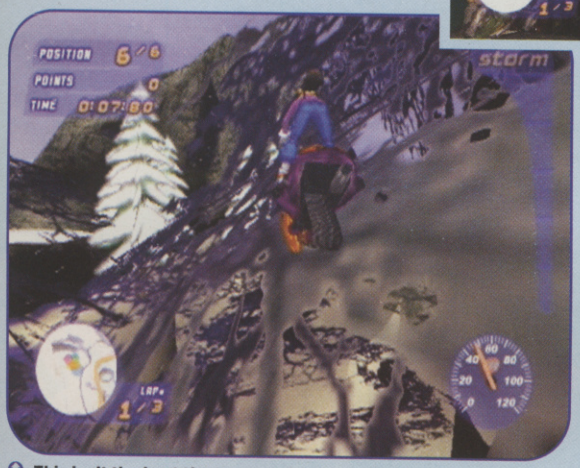


THE DAY OF THE SLED

Or instead, you could Sled Storm race like a lunatic on turbo-powered snow mobiles down icy expanses, smashing through scenery, finding short cuts and jumping huge ravines, battling opponents to cross the finish line alive, let alone in first place. As in racing games like SSX, tricks play as much a role as pure speed for racking up points and filling your STORM gauge, which unleashes hell with speed boosts, stunts and temporary invulnerability.

Sled Storm's two-player split-screen mode provides all the head-to-head action you could want. It should offer an interesting alternative to the tried and tested racing games on PS2.

Lean into the corners, using the analog controls



This isn't the best time you could choose to discover you packed your lunch but forgot the parachute. Aaarrgghhh!

Build up your STORM gauge

Barging opponents is fine

CVG RECKONS

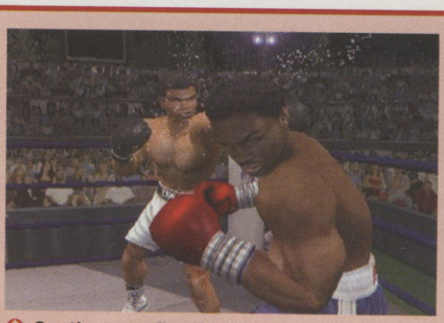
Something a bit different is always good. And if this remains as fun as our first few plays, EA could have another SSX on its hands. Les

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

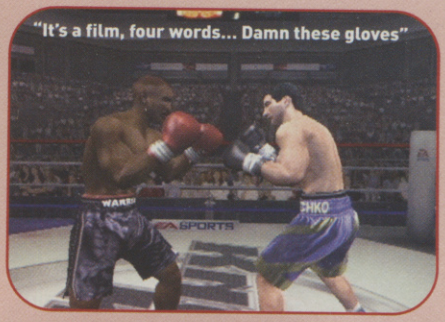
FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **MARCH** DEVELOPER: **EA** PUBLISHER: **EA**

Despite countless pleas to EA Sports, CVG's attempts to get Women's Whipped Cream Wrestling onto the shelves have been fruitless, the brainiacs opting for another round of two sweaty blokes trying to rearrange each others faces. Welcome to Knockout Kings 2002, where the only bare chests on show belong to big burly bruisers.

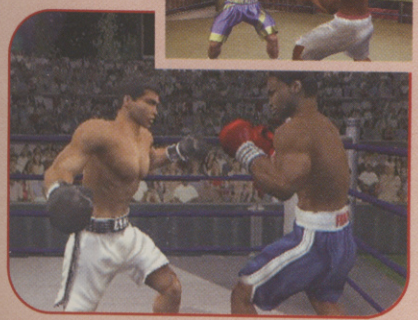
You know the basics already. Get in the ring and punch the crap out of the other guy before he does the same to you. What's new is a vastly overhauled game engine, allowing for more fluid animation and greater control over your boxer. The number of moves has been drastically increased too, so you don't just have to rely on predictable jabs and hooks.



See the sweat fly off when you slug someone



Sparring to see who's got the dumbest haircut



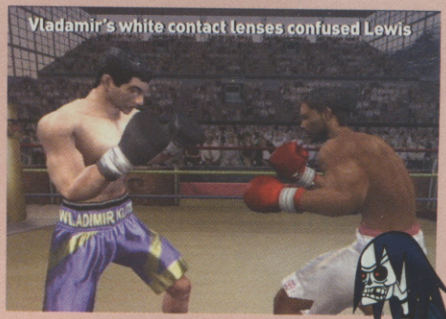
Float like a butterfly, sting like a papercut

THAT'S GOTTA HURT

The biggest laugh comes from the look on the other guy's face as your thump hits home. You'll wince as his jaw cracks and feel pity when his ribcage crumbles under a devastating combo, because every hit looks like it hurts.

Like the others in the series, this features proper commentators and referees, plus arenas taken from the boxing world. But it's the real fighters that continually draw in the crowds, although you won't have heard of most of them.

All of this adds up to a pretty realistic boxing game, and one that couldn't get any more like the real thing unless a gloved fist flew from your TV and cracked you in the gob.



CVG RECKONS

Can't see it knocking out the forthcoming Virtua Fighter 4 but realism nuts will like the bruising feeling to it. Les

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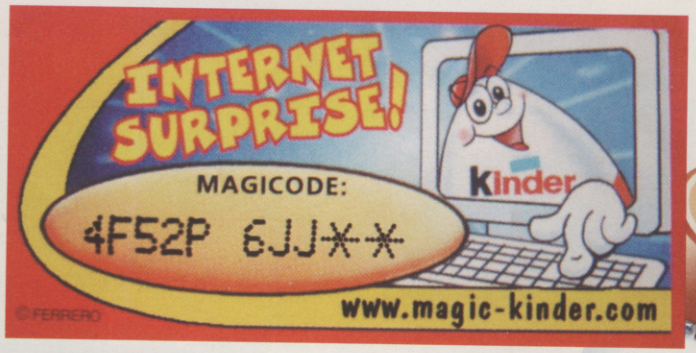

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TIMESPLITTERS 2

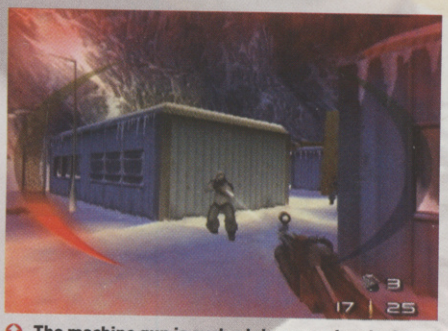
FORMAT: PS2 OUT: TBC DEVELOPER: FREE RADICAL DESIGN PUBLISHER: EIDOS

The original TimeSplitters went for all-out speed and frantic action, sacrificing graphical finesse and depth of gameplay in the process. While it was fun we couldn't help but think that if the ex-Rare peeps managed to hook this action up with GoldenEye's problem-solving gameplay, we'd explode with orgasmic gaming rapture. Better get ready to clean up the mess then, because from what we've seen it looks like Free Rad may have pulled it off.

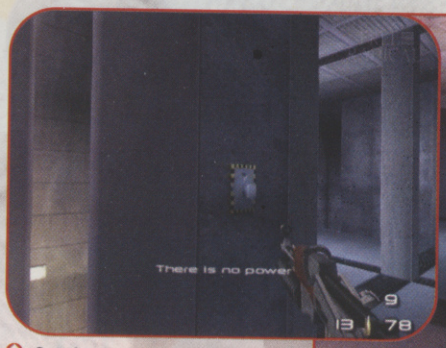
The game kicks off with a snow level leading to a base, just like the snow and bunker levels from GoldenEye. However, rather than being inhabited by Soviet guards and scientists, they're packed with mutants and freaks with guns and grenades. As for you, well you don't have to rely on harsh language to dispose of 'em. You start with a silenced pistol before moving on to sniper rifles, machine-guns, shotguns and – the scorching highlight of the game – the flame-thrower.

You have to laugh maniacally at their death throes

Bigger rooms with less cover can spell disaster

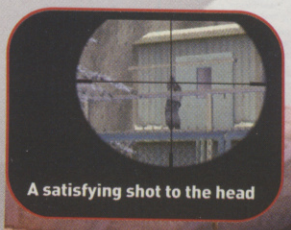


The machine gun is such a labour-saving device. Just hold down the trigger and let it mow 'em down



Get these elevators activated

That gun's pointed a bit on the low side



A satisfying shot to the head

Looks like someone's been playing Metal Gear Solid 2 recently, eh boys?

BRAINS 'N' BRAWN

Instead of relying on mindlessy blasting your way to the end of the level – that was sooo 1990s – you're going to have to use your brain as well as your trigger finger. For example, CCTV cameras will let guards know you're on your way, unless you disable them first (apparently guards don't get suspicious when all their cameras go blank – must be Group 4 or something), doors may need decoding to unlock, and power supplies have to be switched on to power up elevators. Picking off targets from a

The machine-gun also has a grenade-launcher

BURN BABY BURN

Guns are fun, rifles leave your face like trifle but for that ultimate close-up-and-personal way to inflict pain, the flame-thrower has become the office weapon of choice. It even made the rocket launcher-obsessed Walkertron smile. Just look how the action heats up...

Don't panic, you haven't melted his face – he usually looks like that

Toast someone and they'll set fire to anything or anyone they touch

Find a fire extinguisher and you can put the fires out – if you want to

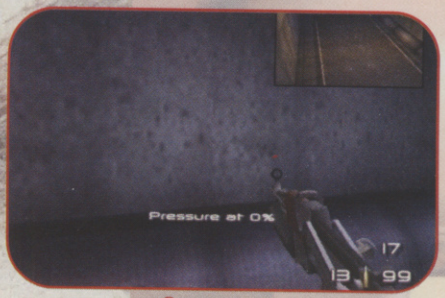
The old shooting-the-exploding-barrels trick

Take to the high ground to deal with spy cameras

The energy bar is like the one in GoldenEye

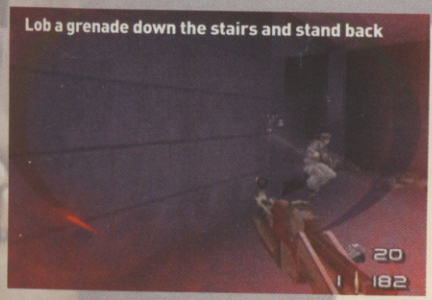
"Has GoldenEye made it on to PS2 at last?"

I guess the career as a supermodel isn't gonna happen for these girls – although there's no accounting for taste

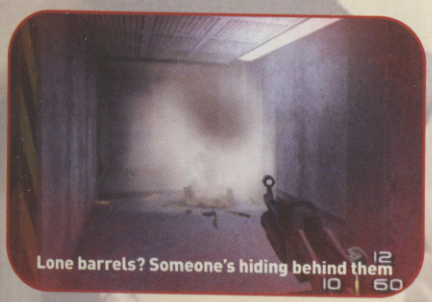


See the results of your work in a window that appears

Blimey, they lock the door then go and leave the roof open



Lob a grenade down the stairs and stand back



Lone barrels? Someone's hiding behind them

distance or bouncing grenades round corners is better than going face to face with anyone, and you know if you try you'll always have to reload at the worst moment.

Now that there isn't the pressure of having to get the game finished by the launch of a machine, Free Rad has been able to focus on the graphics and one-player game. The unusual look of the original remains, but it's better than before. You won't be finding regular humans to shoot at – these guys look weird and would give you quite a scare in a dark alley. Sixty different characters roam the different time zones, ranging from tough guards to Evil Dead-style zombies that could have you looking for the phone number of an exorcist, rather than a gun.

Free Radical is also throwing down the gauntlet to developers of other first-person shooters who have done little more than port PC games to PS2, adding one or two extra features: like the original, TimeSplitters 2 will have a multiplayer level designer. You'll be able to knock up your own massacre mile and save it on your memory card. As well as locations and buildings you'll also be able to decide on the level and intelligence of any bots you want to fight against if none of your friends are up for it. So, if you have the time, you can have almost an infinite number of multiplayer levels.

TimeSplitters 2 is looking amazing. Its control system lends itself to providing both a quick five-minute blast rampage and the full experience of Bond-style gaming. This is the most promising first-person shooter currently on the horizon for PS2.

CVG RECKONS

This is an improvement on the last game – we now have added GoldenEye-style gameplay ingredients and a level designer. Somebody mop up the drool as we can't wait for this one. Les

SPACE CHANNEL 5

FORMAT: **PS2** OUT: **FEB 2002** DEVELOPER: **SEGA** PUBLISHER: **SONY**

In the future, news programmes are way better than the ones on the box now. Instead of blokes in suits grumbling about war, you get lithe dancing space chicks in miniskirts. Not only that, but their stories are broadcast live, as they see off an alien invasion with a selection of nimble dance moves and a ray gun. Space Channel 5 is not just some crazy Sega fantasy. This is genuinely how we believe future news will be.

In case you hadn't guessed, Sega's space-based rhythm action dance-a-thon is coming to PS2. It's not a title we'd have picked if looting Sega's vault of classics, but there you go. It

The Steps reunion tour didn't draw the crowds

In the future, fabric is scarce so clothes are small

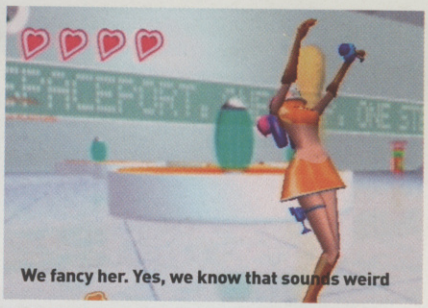
"Up, right, chu, chu, chu, Ulala sidesteps onto PS2"

works like this: you are Ulala, a roving reporter for future news station Channel 5. The Morolians have invaded, and are using their powers to force the people of Earth to dance. By copying their dance moves and zapping them, you can restore humankind to voluntary non-jigginess.

SOUNDS COMPLICATED

They say 'up, left, up, left, chu, chu, chu' and you press up, left, up, left and then X three times. If you can get the rhythm bang on, you'll zap some Morolians. But fudge it and you take a step towards game over. It's entertaining to watch a screen full of humans and aliens dancing in sync like an intergalactic pop group, but you'll have guessed this is a lot more about style than gameplay substance.

The humans you rescue dance behind you, rather than running off



We fancy her. Yes, we know that sounds weird

Zap the Morolians as they beam onto the top of the space station

The version we've played isn't quite as graphically vibrant as the Dreamcast version, but it's otherwise identical. You're given four basic levels replayable as bonus stages later on, and a cameo appearance from Michael Jackson loitering outside a Harley Street plastic surgery clinic. Or is it a space station? Damn these glasses.

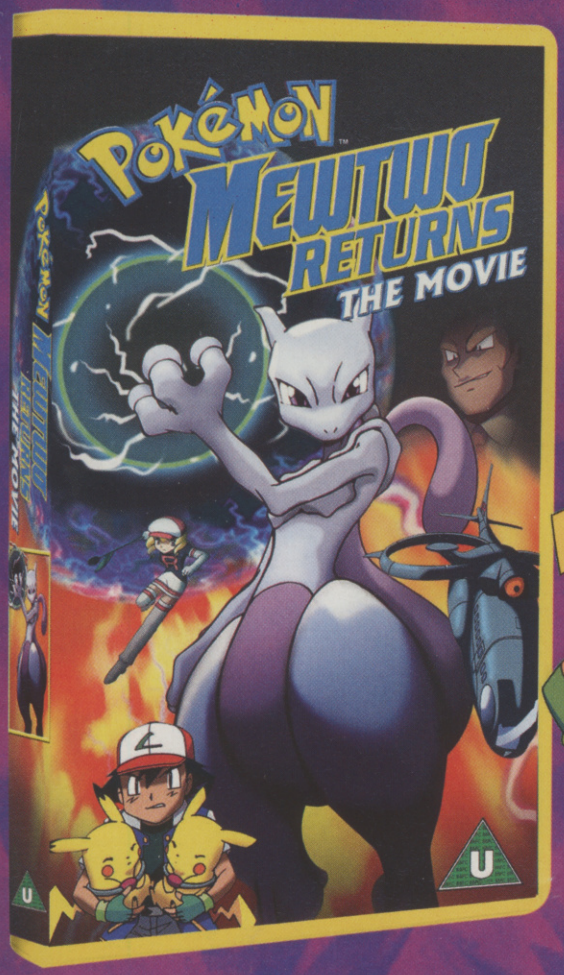
Sega hasn't quite worn out the 'wow' factor that accompanies its every PS2 release, but we'd be up for this a whole lot more had it not already shown Rez – a game that takes rhythm action and twists it into a brain frying audio-visual apocalypse. Beat that.

CVG RECKONS

Has the style of a Versace wardrobe and the depth of a puddle in the desert. But rhythm action is what it is. **Dean**

Pokemon Mewtwo Returns © 1997 - 2001 Nintendo, CREATURES, GAME FREAK, TV Tokyo, ShoPro, JR Kikaku. Pokemon.

Mewtwo's back in an all-new Pokémon movie adventure



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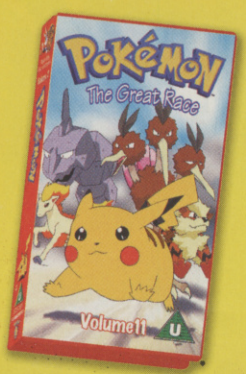
FREE!



Pokémon TV series Vol 11 video

when you buy Pokémon Mewtwo Returns the movie on video!*

*while stocks last

Own it on video from 11th February

www.warnervideo.co.uk AOL Keyword:Video & DVD www.pokemon.com

FORMAT: PC **OUT:** MARCH **DEVELOPER:** LUCASARTS **PUBLISHER:** ACTIVISION **WORDS AND**

TIME TO SHOW THE TRUE COL

SCREENSHOTS: KEITH PULLIN

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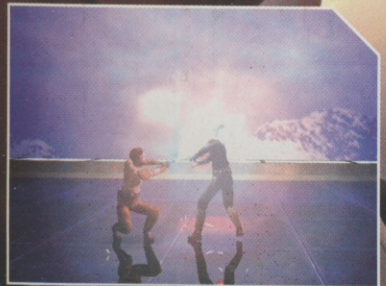
STAR WARS® JEDI OUTCAST

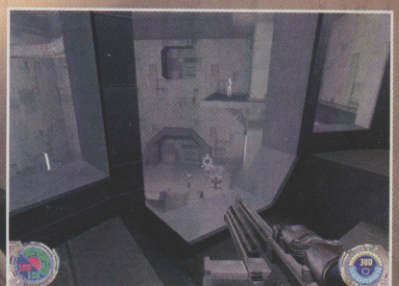
JEDI KNIGHT II

OLOUR OF YOUR LIGHTSABER

Set several years after the first game, Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast sees Kyle Katarn return to rid the galaxy of a menace more evil than the fumes emitted by Jabba the Hutt's arse after a prawn vindaloo. Suffice to say this 'new' terror comes in the familiar form of swarms of Dark Jedi as well as a generous helping of shiny white stormtroopers queueing up to be annihilated like Ewoks in a blender.

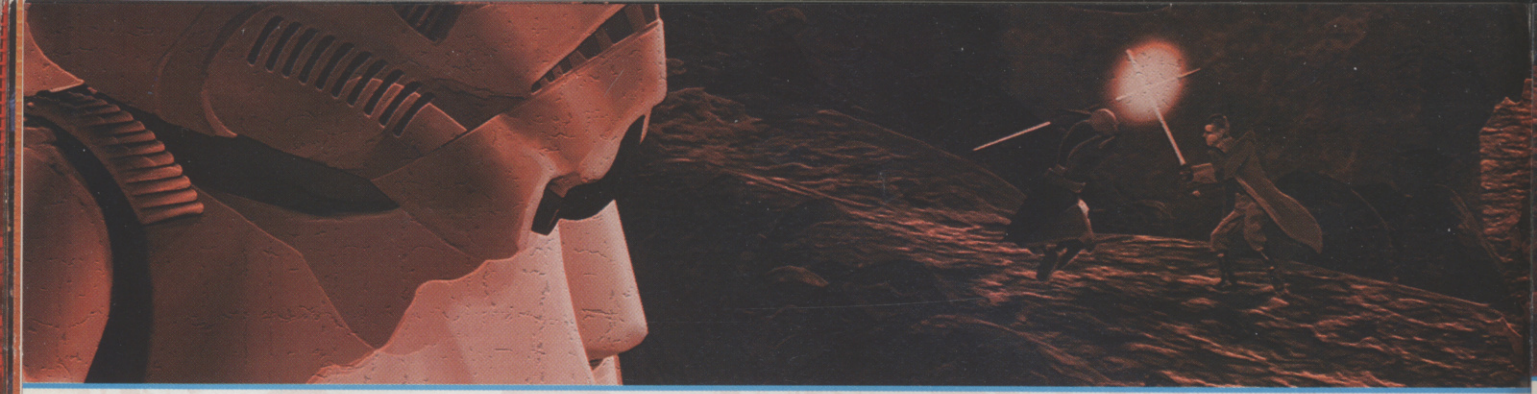


Truly spectacular lightsaber battles await



The levels' scale and size is amazing

Best of all is killing more stormtroopers



CHEW BAK 2 SKOOL

JKII begins with Kyle finding his feet in the Jedi Academy. As you look for a mentor to remind you how to rekindle those rusty lightsaber skills, you can watch other Jedi going through their paces in a variety of amazing training routines.

The mock lightsaber battles are especially impressive with Jedi performing leaps, spins and rolls, all of which are beautifully animated. Forget Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, here is where the real magic takes place.

However, before our hero can even nip off for a quick fag behind the speeder-bike sheds, destiny intervenes and all of a sudden stormtroopers are upon you. The John Williams Star Wars theme kicks in and the slashing and zapping you've been waiting for begins in earnest.

Fans of the original game as well as the Mysteries Of The Sith add-on may well have mixed feelings about JKII. Where Jedi Knight could be played from a third-person or first-person view, JKII is controlled mostly from first-person perspective, apart from the lightsaber battles, which are fought using either view. Still, it's the nifty Quake III engine that powers this forceful adventure, so who can blame LucasArts for sticking to what the Q3 engine does best?

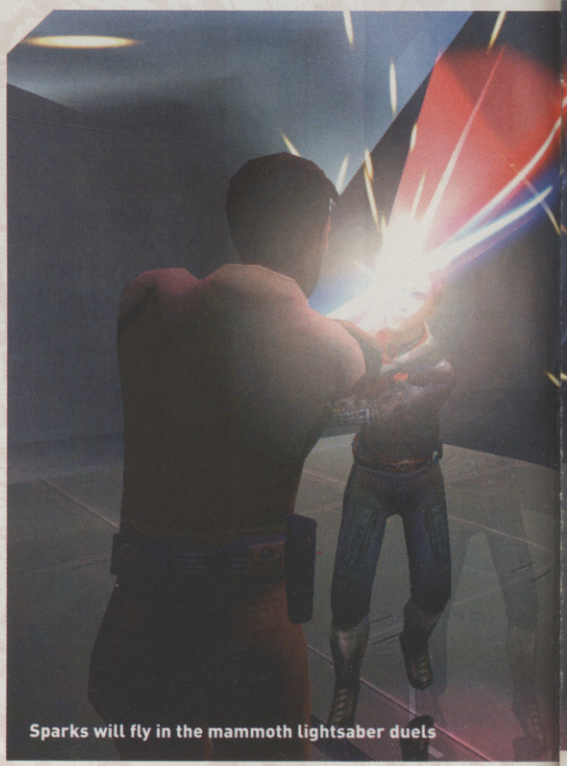
WEAPONS

The sniper rifle here has one of the best zooms ever. Headshot!

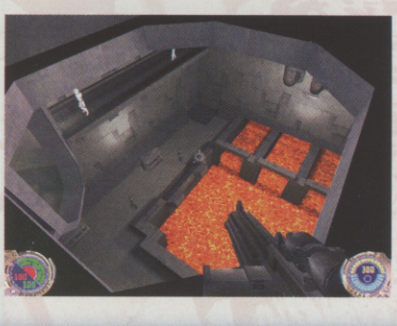
The crossbow may look primitive, but its effect isn't

The Star Wars equivalent of the trusty shotgun

When confronted by troops, try a thermal detonator



Sparks will fly in the mammoth lightsaber duels



Well, it wouldn't be a PC shooter without some lava!

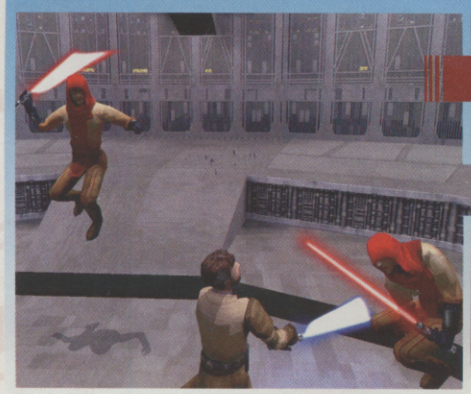
DISTURBANCE IN THE FORCE

Another fundamental difference between JKII and the original is the abolition of the dark/light side of The Force aspect. Instead of choosing which Force powers to develop, your skills are now increased automatically as you progress. The reason for this is that all 20 of the game's levels have been designed around these powers, with certain skills required to get past specific parts of the game. Sure, there'll be moaners who will claim that this detracts from the gameplay, but surely 11 Force powers including Mind Trick, Lightning, Saber Throw, Heal and Jump are enough to satisfy anybody's lust for power?

Oh, and then there are the other 12 weapons, of course. As well as your standard blaster, there's a wicked disintegrate gun that does exactly what it says on the tin, a multitude of mega-powerful double/triple blaster things, and also a wicked sniper laser boasting one of

SITH TIME TO GET NASTY

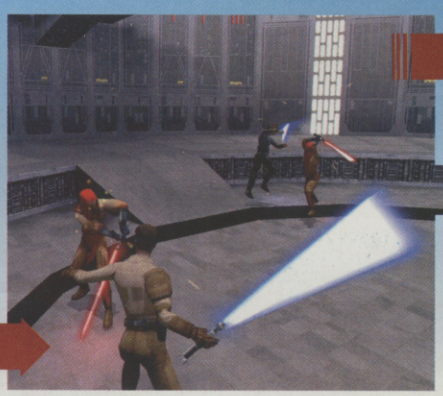
Some of the bosses you encounter in the game are fortunately more intelligent than your average grunt of a stormtrooper. These unfriendly guys are the first real test Kyle faces, and they're anything but green around the gills. You'll need all your skills to survive...



Some hooded Sith Lords pop by to say hello

Luckily you've got friends of your own

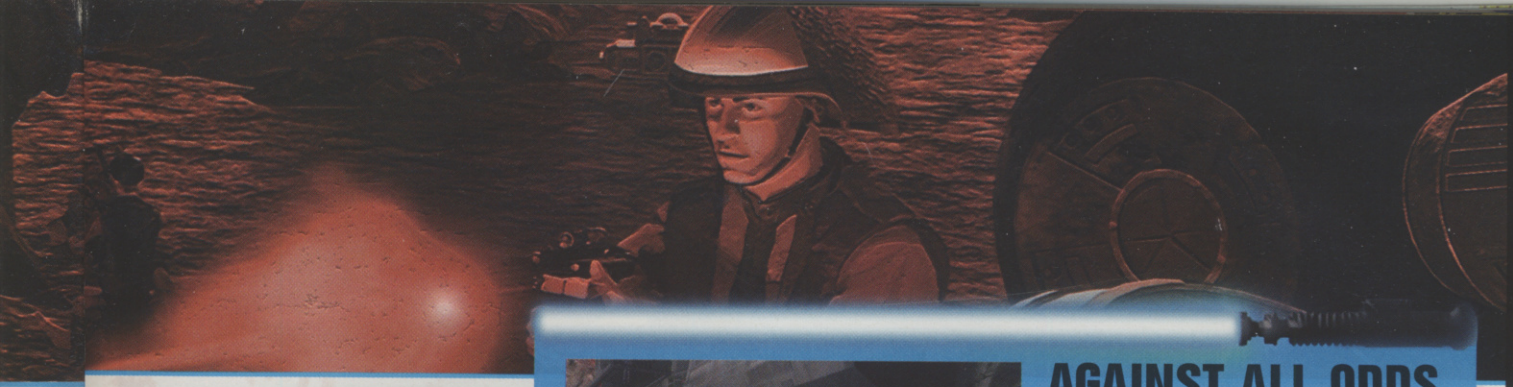
These guys are full of nasty tricks



Use the Force Push to keep them at bay

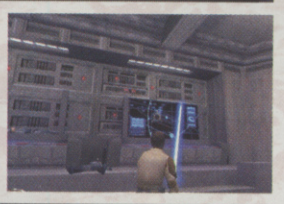
Or try some Jedi attacks instead

With good timing you can do some damage



Fighting in Cloud City

"Want to step outside?"



Check the detailed screen

the most powerful zoom modes you'll have ever seen. There's no doubt about it – this Jedi carries enough firepower to take out a small planet, moons and all!

WHO WANTS SOME?

Star Wars shooters are sometimes criticised for their lack of imagination when it comes to enemies. And let's face it, the initial thrill of dismembering a stormtrooper does tend to lose its shocking edge after you've done it about three zillion times.

Here though, LucasArts has increased the amount of enemies by including many weird and wonderful species, as well as formidable foes, such as TIE-Bombers on strafing runs and AT-ST Walkers. When one of these comes charging out of the fog, it not only adds variety to the gameplay but also a certain amount of extra weight to your underpants too.

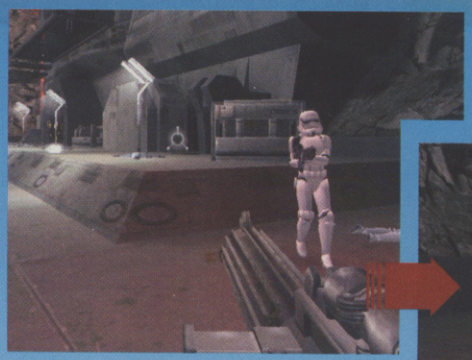
Sadly, the AT-ST's bigger brother, the AT-AT, will not be in the game – something to do with giving the player a chance, apparently. There are fully usable gun-emplacements, which are a laugh to use, but even they wouldn't save you from a fully-blown Imperial Walker blast. But then again, what would?

DIY STAR WARS

Star Wars fans should also be chuffed with the inclusion of many instantly recognisable locations from the films. You even get to fight on the precarious perch at the bottom of Cloud City where Darth Vader and Luke

AGAINST ALL ODDS

It may seem like the entire Empire is on your back, but there's always a way out of trouble. You just need calm nerves and plenty of ammo.



You've got to be quick on the draw around here

"Dance, you mudda! Dance!"

The enemy AI is good enough to know when it's time to run. Go on, cowards, flee!

The final 'trooper falls to his death. With some help from your blaster

Some enemies will run the moment you power-up your lightsaber. "I ain't fighting no Jedi!"

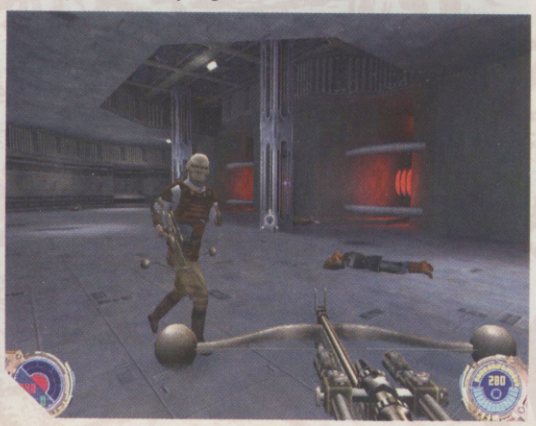
Pick off enemies with expert precision

USING THE FORCE

Force Push ensures enemies keep their distance. Very useful indeed

Force Lightning is what the Emperor used in Return Of The Jedi

"Hey! Where did you get that crossbow?"



Hmm... surely they aren't building *another* Death Star?

Skywalker fought in The Empire Strikes Back. Now how's that for detail? There will be around ten different environments in the game, ranging from claustrophobic space station interiors to vast outdoor levels on the kind of grand scale that now comes as standard in any Star Wars game.

And if that isn't good enough for you, a built-in level editor lets you recreate any location in the Star Wars Universe. Death Star anybody? On top of that, Luke himself makes a cameo appearance, though it has to be said LucasArts was pretty tight-lipped about how and when that happens. But in case you were wondering, Mark Hamill, who did the original voice, won't be offering his talents here. Oh well.

Multiplayer freaks won't miss out either. Up to 32 players can take part in deathmatch, Capture The Flag and Free-For-All games across 12 different multiplayer maps. The good news is that you also have a degree of control over the Force powers – insofar as they are available as pick-ups like any other weapon. But best of all, as a special multiplayer-only feature, you can even pick the colour of your lightsaber. Now that is very, very cool indeed. Unless you choose pink.

In the multiplayer game you can have a red lightsaber too. That'll please Liverpool fans, anyway

Another example of the sheer enormity of some of the levels

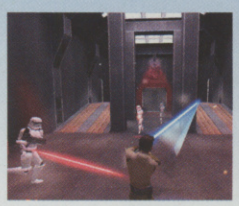
WINNING COMBINATION

With only around two months to go before release, Jedi Knight 2 is looking absolutely blinding. True, it's yet another PC first-person shooter, and yes, people will say there are more than enough of those at the moment. However, the difference is that JKII is Star Wars and Quake III combined in one tight little package. Theoretically, it doesn't get any better than that, so let's keep those lightsabers crossed.

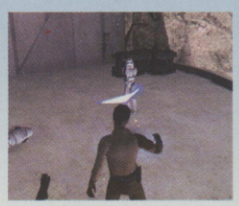
I SEE THE LIGHT

Kyle's Lightsaber is not just a big, glowing sword that makes a funky sound. Like most things Jedi, there's a lot more to it than first meets the eye.

As well as doing serious damage close-up, this bright blue pain-giver can do a whole lot more...



...such as deflecting blaster shots at enemies



Use Saber Throw to chuck your saber at people

STRANGE ENEMIES

The Gran: some kind of mutated cow things. Don't try to milk them.

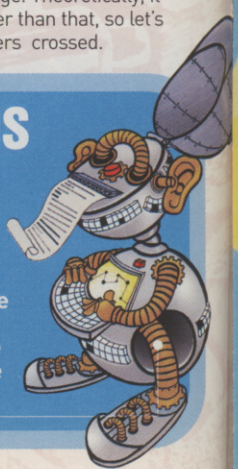
What the..? Answers on a postcard. (Actually, it's one of the Rodian)

Our old friend the storm-trooper. How cool are they?

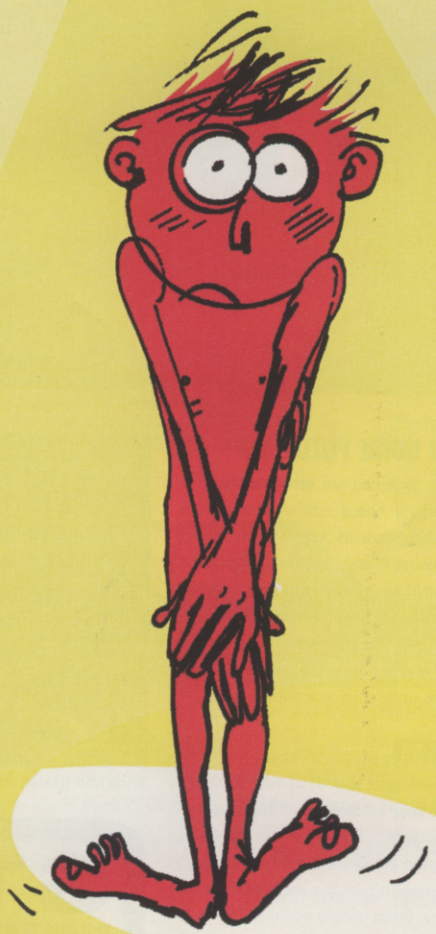
Weequay: their faces alone could kill an elephant stone dead

CVG RECKONS

Fans of the first Jedi Knight may be put off by the lack of fine-tuning when it comes to Force powers. However, the range of characters in the game, and the built-in level editor, should more than make up for it in the long run. Keith



And you thought your sex life was private.



Do you really want your sex life to be a spectator sport?

In the red corner: your mates and hers, winding you up. In the blue corner: your parents and hers, threatening surgery.

And in the middle: you. With enough pressure in your pants to run a power station. And enough on your back to crush a bus.

With all this going on, is it any wonder so many of us rush into sex and screw it up?

So relax. Do it when you decide you're ready – not someone else. And don't take too much notice of what your mates SAY they do.

Most girls don't have full sex until they're at least seventeen (many wait a lot longer). And the average gap between a first kiss and full intercourse isn't ten seconds – it's actually several years (some snogging session).

So take your time. You'll enjoy it more. She'll enjoy it more.

And, when that happens, you'll both find it a whole lot easier to forget about everyone else.

sex

Are you thinking about it enough?

If you're under 18 and need advice about sex or contraception, phone Sexwise on 0800 28 29 30 or visit us at www.ruthinking.co.uk The call is free and confidential.

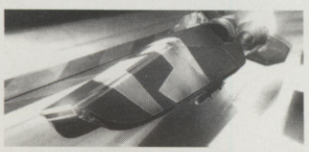
Textphone (for people with hearing impairments) 0800 328 1651.

STOP THIS TRACK BEING BUILT!

The proposed eyesore for London

WHAT IS THIS TRACK FOR?

Apparently "the sport of the future". It will involve eight teams each racing two hovering, or "gravity-defying", ships, travelling at speeds of up to **1000 miles an hour**. Horrifically, information we have uncovered reveals that these vehicles will be armed so that the "pilots", claimed to be "the sixteen superstars of the future", can **shoot each other down** or totally off the track. Hence the name given to the sport, "Wipeout Fusion". To quote the body behind it, "It's all part of the sport." **It must be stopped.**



Anti Gravity or Anti Environment?

HOW WILL IT AFFECT LONDON?

London is the proposed venue for the development of a **multi billion pound** Anti-Gravity Racing circuit. The body behind it believes that to maximise the sport's potential tracks should be built over the worlds major cities, creating "A spectacular venue accessible to millions, the likes of which would be impossible to create in any existing spectator sport". **But at what cost to London?** When questioned, the developers declined to comment, but we know for a fact that the cost will be huge. Apart from **destroying the skyline** of one of the world's most beautiful cities, proposals include the impairment of St Paul's cathedral, the **demolition of Buckingham Palace** and the permanent closure of the River Thames as a passage for shipping to accommodate the track. Not to mention plummeting house prices and the **devastating affect** on the lives of millions of residents and workers.

ENVIRONMENT AND NOISE POLLUTION

The environmental and health implications are **catastrophic.** In a densely populated area the need for space and cleaner air are utmost, this proposal does the exact opposite. Actual details about the fuel these vehicles use are proving illusive, but it's undoubtable that to power such a vehicle it would have to be **extremely volatile**, or worse still, **nuclear** based. What does 1000 mph sound like? No one could ever know until it's too late. The best we could expect is that it would be like having **Heathrow airport in the middle of a city.** Do you want your children to grow up in such an environment?

SAFETY

There is no way that vehicles travelling at speeds of over 1000mph through the heart of a city can be safe, let alone with the danger of "proton cannons" or **deadly** rockets being used during races. Imagine the **devastation** involved in an **accident** over a busy area such as Oxford Circus. Who's going to foot the **medical bills**, the taxpayer? Contrary to their claims, these people obviously have no regard whatsoever for public safety - **your safety.**

YOU CAN HELP

The only people to benefit from these developers succeeding in their **outrageous** proposals are themselves. With **your support** we are in a position to **stop this happening.** To find out more visit **www.stopthetrack.co.uk**

Horrific plans for London at night.

STT
STOP THE TRACK!
www.stopthetrack.co.uk

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WipEout fusion

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PlayStation.2
THE THIRD PLACE

FREEPLAY

VENT YOUR SPLEEN

Stand proud and make some noise! Whether you're a loudmouth mofo with an urge to unleash foul words about a crap game you've played, or you're a happy little munchkin with only pretty words to say about everything, say it here. Don't be shy, peeps, drop Uncle CVG a line.

Do you want your 15 minutes of fame in CVG's Freeplay? Then get your high scores, challenges and opinions to us now! Write to: Freeplay, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD. Or email us at: mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

YOUR SHOUT

Everyone's got an opinion about games, and one man's perfection is another man's pants. So let us know what you think of games we've reviewed by sending 100 words or less with a score out of ten to the usual address or to mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE
Format: PS2
Reviewed: Issue 242
Score: 8/10

WHAT WE SAID:
"One of the PS2's best action games, and you get to be Bond... We'll take it!"

YOU RECKON:
"The first-person action and the driving sections are surprisingly impressive. But there could be more enemies to make it more intense. Still a top game though. 9/10"
Richard Duncan, Belfast

"I was really disappointed. Yeah, it looks great but the missions are quite boring. We need some originality in games like this. 6/10"
Carl Dickinson, Fulham

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN
Format: PC
Reviewed: Issue 242
Score: 9/10

WHAT WE SAID:
"It won't change your world, but it'll make it a lot more fun."

YOU RECKON:
"RTCW is brilliantly atmospheric and the action is totally amazing. It's got some of the coolest characters I've ever seen in an FPS and an awesome soundtrack. It's difficult to find anything wrong with it. 9/10"
Jack Gill, Sevenoaks

"Everything about this game is stunning: the graphics, the music, the gunfights, the monsters, the level design... The single-player is so addictive that you'll find it almost impossible to drag yourself away, and the online multiplayer is out of this world. Hellish heaven. 10/10"
Alex McDonald, Brighton

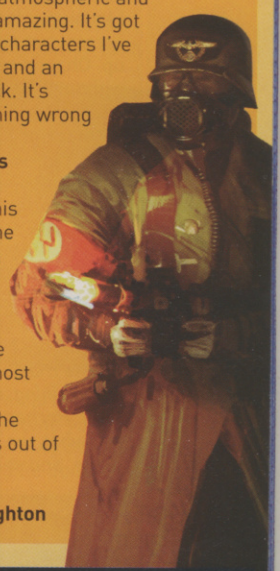


CHART ATTACK

CVG
What's turning us on

1	Metal Gear Solid 2 (PS2)
2	MOH: Allied Assault (PC)
3	Super Smash Bros. Melee (GC)
4	Final Fantasy X (PS2)
5	Halo (Xbox)
6	Mario Advance 2 (GBA)
7	Rogue Leader (GC)
8	Tekken 4 (PS2)
9	Jet Set Radio Future (Xbox)
10	Stuntman (PS2)

READER
From Andrew Pringle, Blackpool

1	Final Fantasy VII (PSone)
2	Secret Of Mana (SNES)
3	Zelda: Majora's Mask (N64)
4	Zelda: Ocarina Of Time (N64)
5	Chrono Trigger (SNES)
6	Pokemon Gold (GBC)
7	Super Mario 64 (N64)
8	Skies Of Arcadia (DC)
9	Final Fantasy IX (PSone)
10	Shenmue (DC)

BEST EVER...
End-of-level bosses

1	Psycho Mantis (MGS)
2	Bowser (Super Mario 64)
3	Ganondorf (Ocarina Of Time)
4	Lucifer (Ghouls n' Ghosts)
5	Bydo (R-Type)
6	Nemesis (Res Evil: Nemesis)
7	Andross (Star Fox)
8	Shub-Niggurath (Quake)
9	Xan (Unreal Tournament)
10	Seven Force (Gunstar Heroes)

BRAINS OF CVG
Mike Cooper's Top 10 Games Ever

1	Super Mario World (SNES)
2	Metal Gear Solid 2 (PS2)
3	GoldenEye (N64)
4	Super Mario 64 (N64)
5	Tony Hawk's 3 (PS2)
6	Mario Kart (SNES)
7	MOH: Allied Assault (PC)
8	Super Tennis (SNES)
9	Halo (Xbox)
10	Grand Theft Auto III (PS2)

HUNTER'S MAILBAG

Got something to say? We'll let you shout it out to the world. Just put pen to paper and send your thoughts to: Hunter's Mailbag, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD, or email: mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

Good day, loyal readers. Welcome to the new Mailbag where courtesy and respect rule. Jolly good job too, I say. Oh wait! Mr Postman – do let me open that gate for you!

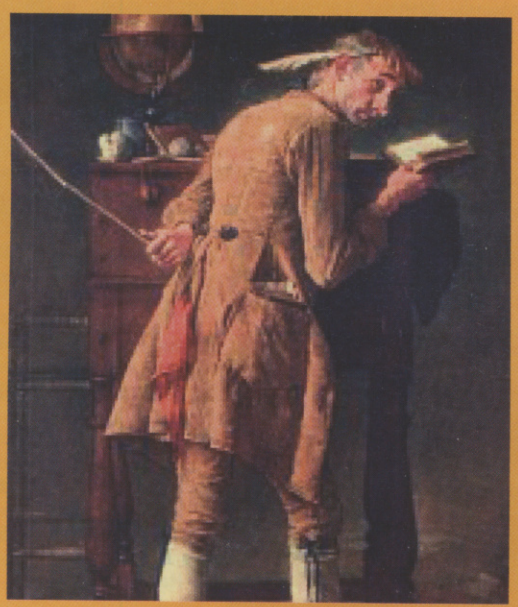
GOLDEN BONE

A TICKING OFF FOR CVG

Okay, I used to love getting the new CVG every month, but I think I'm ready to give it up. Not only is your new look and layout nowhere near as inventive as it once was (as has been said before, 1996-1997 was best), but you've resorted to childish insults in your letters. You've gone downhill so fast you've dug a Death Star-sized trench. And Cackman? I know you feel the need to put your negative views across, but please, in a better light. You need to grow up. Oh, and regarding comments such as "and without your letter this page would be a good deal less boring" – don't print it then! If you don't like the letter, print something better. You used to print the best ones, what happened? As for being the oldest games mag, it seems you've become somewhat senile. You've lost your way, I pray you find your rite of passage once again. I realise you most likely won't print this, but still, it had to be said.

Adrian, ex-CVG lover

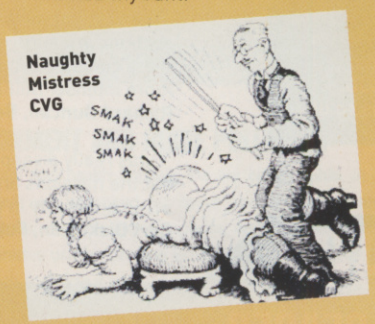
Wow, Adrian, that hurts. Like, we have feelings too, y'know. We're only flesh and blood, just like you. As for the mag, we're trying our best to make an entertaining and informative read, but perhaps you're right. Perhaps we have gone over the top lately. Tell you what, we'll do this letters page real nice and polite, and see how it goes. Deal?



Alex says rudeness will be rewarded with six of the best

TOLD OFF. AGAIN!

You only answer your letters with smart-ass comments or insults. The old CVG used to have detailed answers and debates, which is what it should be like. But now, it's as though you just print the letters which you can make fun out of. The insults and comments are funny for a while, but after so long they are just annoying, and show a lack of respect for your readers. Oh well, I've had my rant.



I still like CVG and will continue buying it – I'm making these points to try and help you to make the mag better.

DJM, Stoke-On-Trent

Okay, DJM, check out the Golden Bone letter and you'll see we're doing our utmost to remedy the rudeness on this page. We don't mind admitting that we're hurt, but hey, we can take it!

AT LAST! SOMEBODY LIKES US!

I've been reading your mag since I was a wee lad, and now I have grown a beard and suchlike you'd think maybe I would abandon ship and progress to a more 'mature' magazine. Guess again. Your magazine may be targeted at a younger audience, but I think it sits nicely in the middle. Edge magazine is more objective and direct but can become a little tedious; it lacks emotion. You lot are a barrel of laughs though, and remind me why I got into games in the first place – to have fun! CVG knows that all the real gamer is truly thinking about is 'Can I run that guy over and make his leg fall off' in GTAIII. You guys have all the knowledge of Edge magazine but utilise it in a more compromised, but realistic way. I guess this is little more than a 'big up', but I just thought you would like to know.

John Murray-Hill

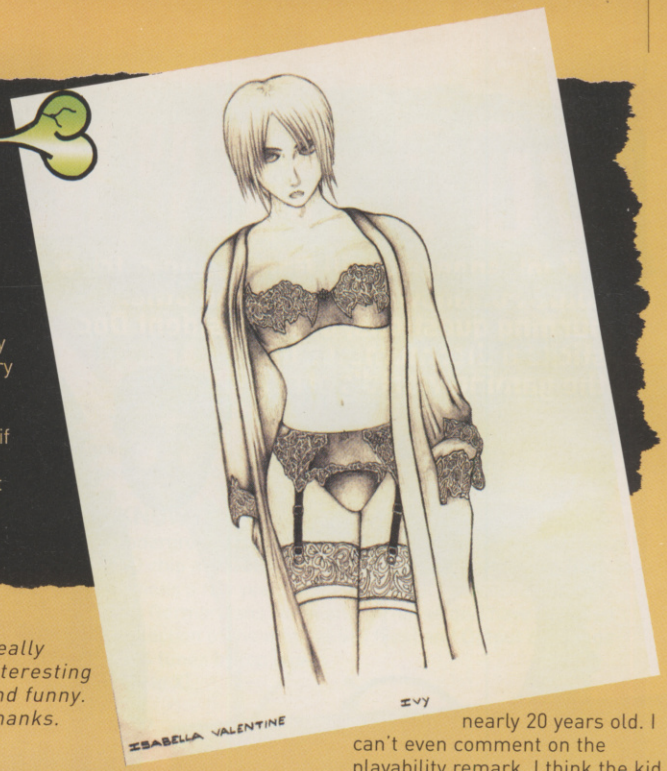
Thanks for your letter, John. We did indeed want to know. Your reward is a picture of a shark on a car. Enjoy!

BIG UP NINTENDO MASSIVE!

I think that the GameCube will be better than the Xbox. You know how many consoles Nintendo has produced, and they are all great.

DRAWINZ WOT YOU DUN

CVG likes nothing better than to receive drawings of fit women in scanty lingerie, especially when so much care and attention has gone into every curve, brassiere frill and stocking buckle. Soul Calibur's hot honey, Ivy, has rarely looked this feisty, so thank you Aaron Foster for sending us this fine piece of trouser-arousing work. Keep 'em coming people, and if you want to make sure that your drawing gets in the mag, make sure that you grab our attention. Be it sexy, shocking, sick, or s**t – we want to see it. So delve deep into your creative wells and let the wild waters run free. Send your entries to: Drawinz Wot You Dun. CVG, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD.



SHORT STUFF

Please print my name in the magazine! I only want to have a little fame, please?
Aaron McLaughlin

CVG: *We're happy to help.*

Mum: "Ciaran! I told you to do the dishes after you do your homework! Why are you playing your Dreamcast?"
Me: "It's okay, I haven't done my homework yet."
Ciaran Doherty, Co. Donegal

CVG: *Genius, Ciaran.*

Is it true Mario Advance 2 for the GBA is coming soon?
Tony S, Dingley

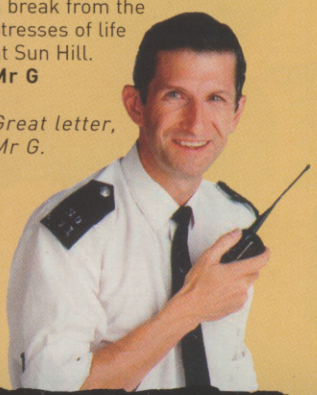
CVG: *It is and it's already out in Japan. It's a straight port of SNES Super Mario World.*

Remember the SNES? It was top quality gaming hardware. And the Nintendo 64, formerly known as 'the biggest most fastest game console on earth' (or something like that). I don't have one, and most likely won't be getting one, but I know it was great, and it was made by Nintendo.
Mike

Thank you for your excellent letter, Mike. In fact, it was hot contender for the Golden Bone, and we would have made it so, but we had already made Adrian's letter Golden Bone instead. Maybe next month, eh?

STRANGE AND WARPED MIND

Is it just my strange and admittedly warped mind or has Reg Hollis taken a holiday from The Bill to drive about on the water in the second level of House Of The Dead 2 on Dreamcast? I suppose he needs a break from the stresses of life at Sun Hill.
Mr G



Great letter, Mr G.

Really interesting and funny. Thanks.

OOOH, SPOOKY!

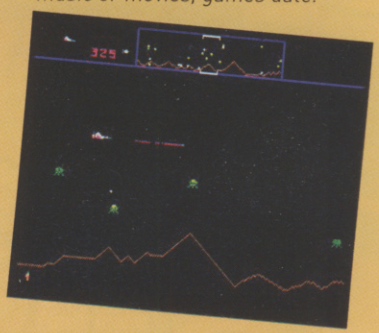
The other day I was watching a film called Phantoms. After about 10 minutes I realised it reminded me of Silent Hill/Silent Hill 2. The whole structure of the film is much the same. The town is empty, covered in fog and there are only a few people around. Shame about the film, though.
Tom Webbs, Portsmouth

Phantoms was made in 1998 and starred Ben Affleck. The movie was made before Silent Hill 1 came out. Thanks ever so much for the letter, Tom.

WE'RE REALLY IN THE DOGHOUSE THIS MONTH

I've been reading CVG for years and I was shocked by your review of Midway's Greatest Hits on GBA in issue 242. How a magazine with your reputation can call games such as Defender and Joust 'stinkers' defies belief. Without them, where would we be? You say: "The games look awful and are barely playable by today's standards." You should show a bit of respect, they are nearly 20 years old. I can't even comment on the playability remark. I think the kid who wrote this doesn't know his a**e from a hole in the ground. Get it together CVG – remember your roots.
Mart

Good point, Mart, but unlike music or movies, games date.



Yes, they have a certain charm, but be honest: would you play them out of anything but nostalgia? We'd be doing our readers a disservice if we recommended crusty games that no longer cut the mustard. But thanks loads for the letter. We really appreciate all your comments.

CVG STINKERS

THE ANGRIEST MAN IN BRITAIN*

I think Sony is giving you a little backhander because you are giving crap PS2 games eight or nine out of ten. There are only about five good games for the PS2. The reason you gave Halo nine was so you can give MGS2 ten and say it's better, even though it's not. Your magazine is biased towards everything that's not PS2. Bring on the smart-ass comments on if you dare.
Mr X

Oh, we dare, Mr X. Okay, for a start, how can we be getting a backhander from Sony and then be biased towards everything that's NOT PS2? Is it just us or you making absolutely no sense there? Words are difficult, aren't they? And on page 78 you'll see MGS2 gets 9/10. We would have given it 10, but we wanted to make you look a fool. Anyone can see we don't favour Sony. We favour Nintendo. Thanks for the letter though.

*AND THE STUPIDEST

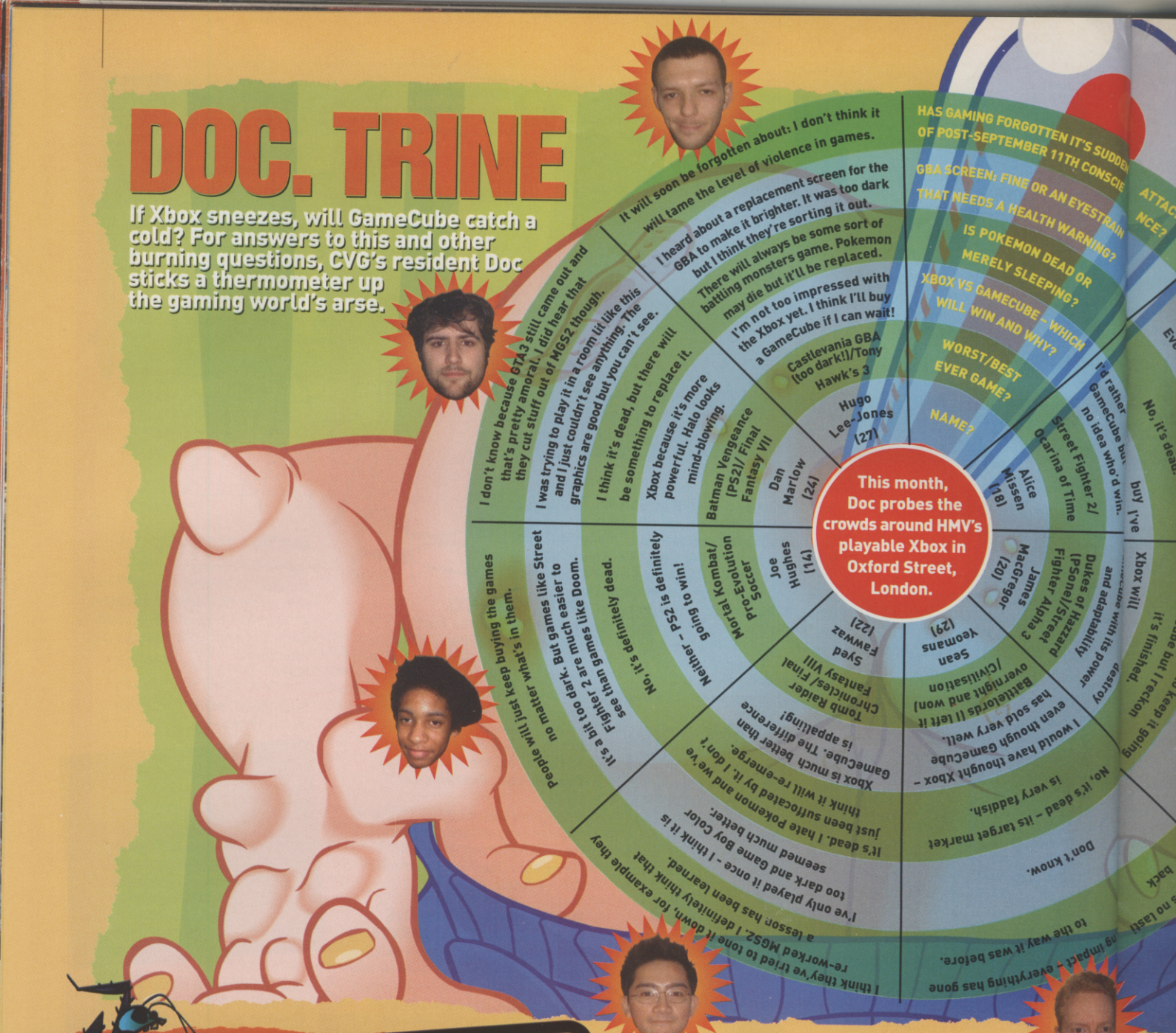
HAVE YOUR SAY

With Xbox due to launch in the UK on March 14, and GameCube rumoured to be arriving as little as a few weeks later, we asked seasoned gamers: "Who will win in the Xbox vs GameCube shooting match?"

XBOX BY A MILE	18%
GAMECUBE BY A MILE	20%
TOO CLOSE TO CALL	23%
I DON'T CARE – PS2 ROCKS	33%
I LIKE BLUEBERRY MUFFINS	6%

DOC. TRINE

If Xbox sneezes, will GameCube catch a cold? For answers to this and other burning questions, CVG's resident Doc sticks a thermometer up the gaming world's arse.



BUG STOMPER

Face it, we've all seen them. Sometimes they're just amusing little glitches. Other times they're horrific balls-ups that have the ability to ruin whole games. Bugs – no matter how hard they try, they can never quite get rid of them.

So to make sure fellow players know where to expect a code cockroach, let us know when you find one. We'll print the worst offenders and crush them with a great big CVG hobnailed boot.

Send any crime candidates you come across to mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk, sit back and allow us to do the rest.

TELL US ABOUT THOSE GAMING GLITCHES

CIVILISATION 3

Format: PC

When at war, offer to meet your rivals. Pick the Gold Per Turn and fill the box with nines. Their advisor may agree to these impossible terms and you get the money. *From Ade via e-mail*

Your enemies won't actually be able to pay up

RED FACTION

Format: PS2

In the bit where you're busting the geothermal facility, I walked up to a guard in the lava room and he rolled into the lava. He stood up and started shooting me. Weird. *From Jamie Cartland*

Mind the burning hot rock or you'll be for it too

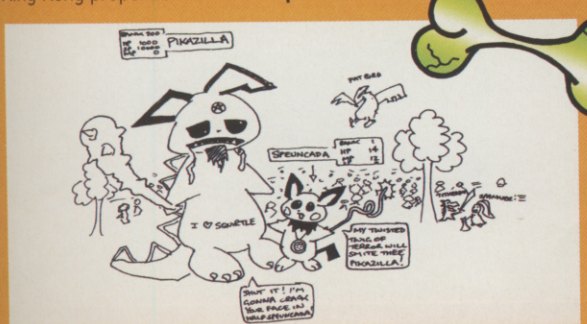
Words and interviews: Lewis Packwood

MELTING POT

SEND US YOUR GAME IDEAS

MEDIEVAL POKEMON MMORPG

Instead of a meagre 251 Pokemon why not have an MMORPG where there are thousands of creatures making it virtually impossible to collect them all. You could have loads of medieval weapons and characters could evolve to stupid sizes, reaching King Kong proportions. © **Jon Spellman**



ACTION REPLAY

GROOVY GAMING GEAR OF YESTERYEAR

#8: COMMODORE 64

Year released: 1982
Manufacturer: Commodore

DID YOU KNOW?

There's an underground music scene dedicated to keeping the voice of the C64 SID chip alive, started when Chris Abbott released Back In Time compilations a few years ago – check out www.c64audio.com. More recently, German fans (www.enduro-disks.de/) have released Input 64 (a collection of the original SID files) and Output 64 (songs inspired by C64 tunes by top bands such as Add N to X).

WHAT IS IT?

In the 80s you were either a BBC, Spectrum or Commodore kid. The C64 had a massive 64k (!) of memory, amazing sound, 16 colours and superb hi-res graphics (well, back then). It was also many kids' first taste of an online network when Commodore released the Compunet Modem to spend all night downloading demos and chatting to like-minded games fans.

WHY DO I WANT ONE?

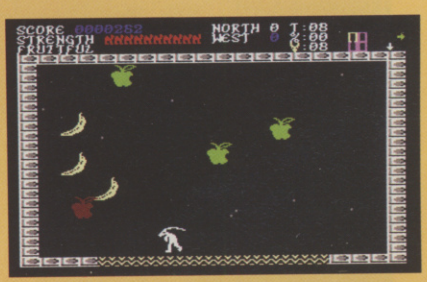
For the wad of very original titles that are still worth a look today. The Eidolon, Koronis Rift and Ballblazer are some of the earliest games from Lucasfilm (now Lucasarts). Its first release Rescue On Fractalus used a pioneering technique to generate the believable 3D landscape – finding a 'Jaggi' enemy hammering on your cockpit window is still believable enough to make you jump 20 years later!

LOOK OUT FOR...

The 1541 Disk Drive. It sounded like an out-of-control machine-gun when loading games and was never the fastest thing going, but anyone who ever attempted to play those pesky multi-load titles will testify to its merits. After a while you'll also need to get your mitts on an 'Azimuth Head Alignment Tape' to help games load correctly.

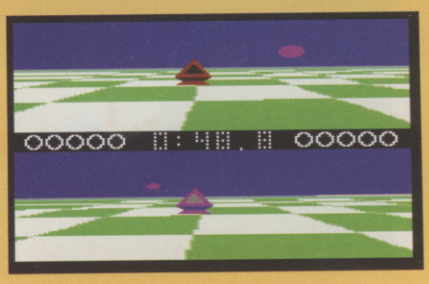
WHERE CAN I GET ONE?

Just about anywhere. Should cost about £25 for the machine and Datassette unit (normal cassette players are not compatible). Car boot sales are good for cheapo games but the retro games section on Ebay often has C64 gems.



ALTERNATIVELY

The Net is rammed with fans keeping the name alive but try www.c64.com for game ROMs and www.lemon64.com for a very interesting museum section. http://cia.c64.org is brimming with games, emulators, cover art and SID files. If you're after reviews, then try www.gamebase64.com.



THE DOGHOUSE

BEWARE: THESE CHEATS CAN BITE!

Our fluffy mutt has a nose for cheats. In fact, other than peeing on trees, there's nothing beats a good whiff of foul play. So if you sniff out any decent cheats, send them in. Just make sure they're good ones, 'cos Hunter goes for the nuts.

DOOM ADVANCE

BESERK: Pause the game, then hold L + R and press B, A, B, A (x5)
COMPUTER MAP: Pause the game, then hold L + R and press B, A (x7)
RADIATION SUIT: Pause the game, then hold L + R and press B, B, A (x6)
ADVANCE LEVELS: Pause the game, then hold L + R and press A, B, A, A, B, B, A, A
TOWER OF BABEL: Pause the game, then hold L + R and press A, B, A, B, A, B, B, A

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

DARTH MAUL: Complete the Career mode once, collecting gold medals in all three competitions to unlock Darth Maul.
WOLVERINE: Complete the Career mode twice, using two different characters, collecting gold medals in each competition so you can unlock Wolverine.
OFFICER DICK AND PRIVATE CARRERA: Complete Career mode four times to unlock Officer Dick, five times to unlock Private Carrera, using a different character each time.
OLLIE THE MAGIC BUM: Complete all tasks in Career mode seven times with a different character each time and get all gold medals to unlock Ollie the Magic Bum.
KELLY SLATER: Complete all the tasks in Career mode eight times to unlock surfer Kelly Slater.
DEMONESS AND NEVERSOFT EYEBALL: Complete Career mode ten times to unlock Demoness. Complete Career mode 22 times with a different character each time to unlock the Neversoft Eyeball mascot.
CHEAT MODES: Complete Career mode the following numbers of times to unlock new cheat modes: Snowboard Mode (11), Always Special (12), Perfect Rail Balance (13), Super Stats (14), Giant Mode (15), Slowmo Mode (16), Perfect Manual Balance (17), Tiny Mode (18), Moon Physics (19), Expert Mode (20) and First-Person Mode (21).

RAMPAGE PUZZLE ATTACK

To open all levels and characters enter the password screen and type in G J P P N L P T N Q. Cheat sent in by Vince Mainolfi.

BATMAN VENGEANCE

As Robin isn't here to hold your hand, use this cheat instead.
UNLIMITED BATARANGS: At the main menu press L1, R1, L2, R2. You will hear a noise to confirm correct code entry.

ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

To get the cheat mode, simply press Enter during gameplay then type cheat, press the space bar, and enter one of the following cheats. Then press Enter again. If you do it right you will hear the sound of a Predator switching vision types.

Invincibility: Type in mpcanthurtme for an easy time

Weapons and ammo: Type in mpschuckit

Armour: Type in mpsmithy for the full dose

Ammo: Need even more? Type in mpkohler

Restart: If you're sick of cheating, type in mpbeamme to restart the level

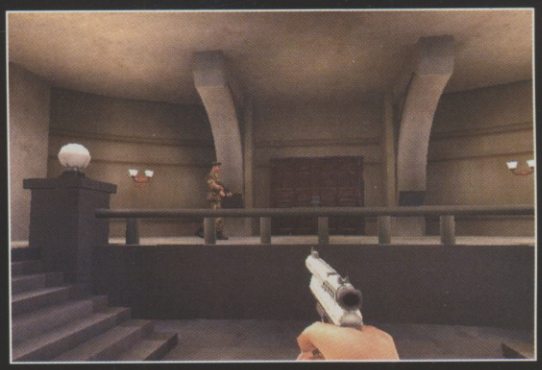
JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE

There are no button codes in Agent Under Fire as yet, but that doesn't mean there aren't any cheats. The only problem is you have to put in some effort to earn them.

After finishing each level you will be presented with a stat screen informing you how well you played. This screen will indicate your time, how many enemies you had and your accuracy, all of which give you the points needed for you to gain a reward.

Perform well in a level and you'll get a Gold Reward, like the Golden Sun, to unlock that level's first cheat

After getting the Gold, find all the 007 Bonus icons, like a multi-player skin, to receive a Platinum award for a second reward



GHOST RECON

Press Enter on the NUM pad to display the console window, then enter one of the following codes.

EFFECT	CODE
God Mode	superman
Team God Mode	teamsuperman
Invisibility	shadow
Team Invisibility	teamshadow
Unlimited Ammunition	ammo
All Inventory Items	refill
Faster Movement	run
Take Over Enemy Bases	rock
Paintball Mode	extremepaintball
Suicide	god
Win Current Mission	autowin
Chicken Grenades	chickenrun

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

EXTRAS: Finish the game on the hardest difficulty setting to unlock an extra character who can wield two swords, and the Gauntlet level, where you need to hack and slash through levels in a time limit. Finishing Gauntlet mode will unlock Extreme mode, which, as you might have guessed, is even harder.

CHEAT MENU: Hold down R2 + L1 + Left + Triangle, then press start during gameplay. A cheat menu will appear with invulnerability and level warp. Very useful for those gamers who lack patience.

SYPHON FILTER 3

If you wanna make things in Syphon Filter 3 harder for yourself, then try these cheats and get extra replay value for your money.

HARD MODE: Highlight the 'New Game' option at the main menu. Then hold down Square + Circle + L1 + R2 + Select + Up + X. For Super Agent mode, finish the game and start a new one. Now enter the options and enable Super Agent to get one-shot kills. Cheats sent in by Simon Par.

YOUR BEST TIPS

Every month the best reader tip will be printed and will score one of the latest games as a prize. Send your tips to: barny_zoeller@dennis.co.uk or

THE DOGHOUSE,
COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES,
DENNIS PUBLISHING,
30 CLEVELAND STREET,
LONDON W1T 4JD

DRIVEN

Having problems? Then enter one of these codes at the main menu screen:

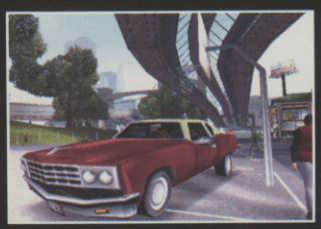
NAME	DESCRIPTION
ALL CARS	U,D,R,R,L,U,U,D
ALL TRACKS	U,U,L,D,L,R,R,U
ARCADE CHAMPIONSHIPS	R,L,U,R,D,D,L,L
MULTIPLAYER CHAMPIONSHIPS	L,D,L,U,R,L,D,R
STORY MODE	D,L,U,R,R,U,D,L

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

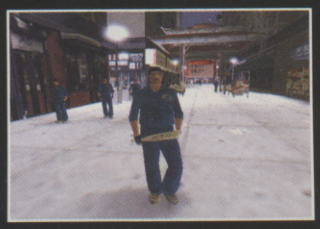
Another load of Grand Theft Auto III cheats, with more to come next month. All must be tapped in during the game without pausing. Be warned that some involve pressing the fire button, so make sure you are not holding onto anything too destructive!

Get more money by pressing R2, R2, L1, L1, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up

Destroy nearby cars by pressing L2, R2, L1, R1, L2, R2, Triangle, Square, Circle, Triangle, L2, L1



Repair all vehicles with Circle, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Square, Up, Down, Up, Down, Up, Down



Change your appearance by tapping in Right, Down, Left, Up, L1, L2, Up, Left, Down, Right

INSPECTOR GADGET – ADVANCE MISSION

Enter the password screen and bash in one of the following codes to advance up the levels. Now prepare to get even further when levels are too hard. Sent in by Vince Mainolfi.

STATUE OF LIBERTY, In the Statue: *7*MM14
STATUE OF LIBERTY, The Flame of Liberty: *3HML14
THE TOWER, The Tower Keeps Watch: R1FM2Q4
THE TOWER, The Lift: R5ZM3Q4
THE TOWER, Higher than everything: *9ZM3L4
THE GREAT WALL, At the foot of the Great Wall: *FFM2L4
THE GREAT WALL, On the Great Wall: R7FM274
BIG BEN, The Palace: P153LR5
BIG BEN, The Top: ZF53LM5
EGYPT, The Valley of Kings: Z9P3MM5
EGYPT, The Great Pyramid: PC5ML85

REALLY STUCK ?

Absolutely stumped on a game? Ridiculed by your mates? There is hope: The Computer And Video Games Tips Helpline.

0906 466 4659

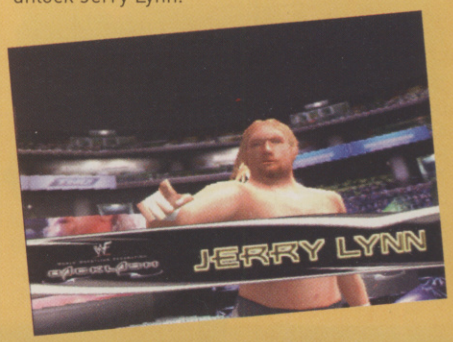
Open seven days a week, 8am-11pm. On the very rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team, who guarantees to find you an answer within 24 hours.

Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does before calling. In case of problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6155.

WWF SMACKDOWN! JUST BRING IT

RHYNO: Turn down Vince McMahon's Tag Team offer. Talk trash on the mic to the first wrestler who enters the ring. Go to the Parking Lot and speak to Vince. Win the match he puts you in. When the next Superstar calls you out, choose to 'Stay Backstage'.

Go to the Lobby and speak to Earl Hebner and ask him to referee a Hardcore match for you. Earl will follow you backstage where you'll find Rhyno. Beat Rhyno to unlock him.
TAJIRI: Refuse Vince's tag team offer. Talk trash on the mic to the Superstar who comes to the ring. Talk to Michael Cole in the Lobby and tell him you were just messing around. Go see William Regal, in the Commissioner's Office, tell Regal you're not interested in a shot at the Intercontinental Title. This makes Regal furious and he books you in a match with Tajiri. Beat Tajiri to unlock him.
SPIKE DUDLEY: First, don't select a Dudley Boy. Accept Vince's offer to form a tag team and find a partner in the Lobby (not a Dudley Boy). Win the TLC match and the tag team champions challenge you to a six-man tag match. Tell your partner to go and pick the third team-mate. While your partner is off looking, you're free to wander around. Walk to the corridor that leads to the Changing Rooms and you'll find Spike and Molly. Choose to help out Spike and the Dudleys will challenge you to a match. Win the match to unlock Spike Dudley.
MICK FOLEY: Refuse Vince McMahon's offer to form a tag team. Talk trash on the mic to the first wrestler who enters the ring. Speak to Vince in the Parking Lot. He'll put you in a singles match. Win the match. When the next Superstar calls you out, select 'Show up on-stage'. Pick any style of match and win. You'll now get a title shot against the WWF Champion. Lose the match, when the option for a re-match appears, select 'No'. Win the following match to unlock Mick Foley.
JERRY LYNN: Refuse Vince's offer to form a tag team. Talk trash on the mic to the wrestler that comes to the ring. Go to the Parking Lot and speak to Vince. He'll put you in a singles match. Win that match. When the next wrestler appears in the ring and calls you out, select 'Stay Backstage'. Go to the Lobby and speak to Earl Hebner. Say "Hi Hebner. How are you?" He'll tell you that the Commissioner is looking for you. Tell William Regal you're not interested in a title match. Win the 4-way match that he assigns you and you'll unlock Jerry Lynn.



HALF-LIFE

At the PS2 main menu, go to Options and then choose 'Cheat Codes'. Input any of the following codes and use the Activate Cheat option to switch them on or off. This game is tricky so hopefully these codes will make things easier.

Invincibility: Left, Square, Up, Triangle, Right, Circle, Down, X

Unlimited ammunition: X, Left, Circle, Down, X, Left, Circle

Slow motion mode: Right, Square, Up, Triangle, Right, Square, Up, Triangle

Invisibility: Left, Square, Right, Circle, Left, Square, Right, Circle

Alien mode: Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle

Xen gravity: Up, Triangle, Down, X, Up, Triangle, Down, X

CHALLENGE CVG
BEAT US AND BOAST

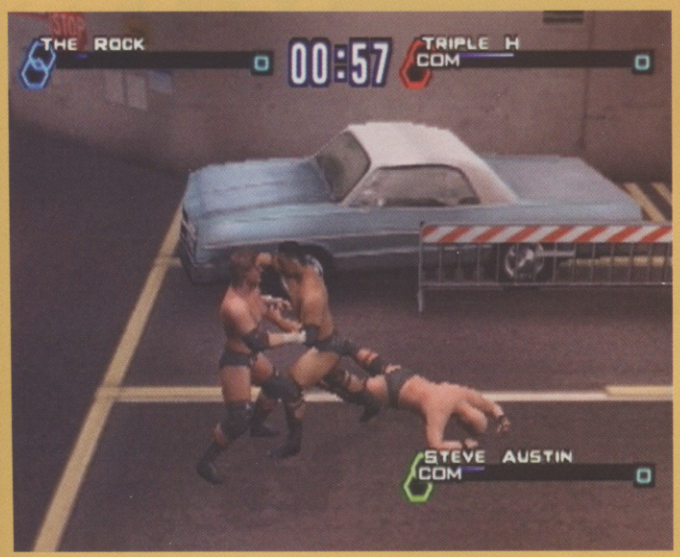
This is the part of the mag where you get the exclusive opportunity to play us at our own game. Just follow the rules below and come see how good you are or how bad we are. Think you're big enough to put your money where your mouth is? Then you can't turn down this challenge – it's your one chance to humiliate the so-called 'experts'.

CHALLENGE 1

Game: Quake 3 Arena
Formats: PC/Mac
Rules: Highest frag count
To take part: Log on to our server called CVG House Of Pain (IP 192.168.0.1 or 62.49.226.118) between 4 and 8pm on Monday 4 March.

CHALLENGE 2

Games: Half-Life/WWF Smackdown! Just Bring It/Ecks Vs. Sever
Formats: PS2/PS2/GBA
Rules: We make 'em up as we go along
To take part: Send your name and contact details to the usual address. Mark the envelope Challenge CVG or email: barny_zoeller@dennis.co.uk, telling us in no more than 20 words why you reckon you can have us. If you are one of the two best, be prepared to back up your words with action after we invite you to our dungeon where we'll slay you in brutal fashion. Come on then, you wimps.



"Who are you calling a wimp? Too late – I'm gonna rip your head off and spit down your neck"

There's surely nothing more satisfying in this cruel world of ours than brutally gunning down your opponent in cold blood

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GAMES: SONIC ADVENTURE 2: BATTLE, SONIC ADVANCE **FORMAT:** GAMECUBE/GBA **OUT:** UK: TBC, J

SOMETHI

SOMETHING N

SOMETHING BORRO

SOMETHING BLU

Sega's uber mascot is hitching up with Nintendo. But will there be fireworks on the wedding night?

ING OLD, NEW, ROWED,

Import game supplied by Computer Exchange (Tel: 01923 228 828)

Watching The Terminator for the billionth time, who hasn't daydreamed about having their own personal time machine? You could solve ancient riddles vital to our understanding of the human condition, like was Hitler really a coprophiliac and just what was Nero fiddling with when Rome burned?

But, as every time traveller knows, you must never interfere with the time line. Partly because half the time no one would believe a word you had to say about the future. Improbable-sounding flying carriages, nipple clamps and Popstars? Our bemused ancestors would have asked "How?" and, indeed, "Why?" – before locking us up. But most dangerous of all, if you told a Mega Drive obsessive in 1991 that Sonic the Hedgehog would eventually end up dancing to Nintendo's tune, you'd doubtless have been ripped limb from limb by enraged Sega fanboys.

GET CONNECTED

Sonic's new games can be connected using a GameCube GBA Cable. In both adventures you can collect Chao creatures which can then be trained in SA2: Battle's Chao Garden and entered in competitions.

To train your cuties on the move you can transfer them into Sonic Advance's Tiny Chao Garden. Here you can use rings to buy fruit for your beasties or play mini-games for extra tokens. Training Chaos takes time, but strong creatures can be entered in races and the new Chao Karate option.

Drop him in and the Chao will be released into Sonic Advance's Tiny Chao Garden

In Battle's Chao Garden, carry your creature to the machine with a rotating GBA

Now you can play mini-games and use rings to buy stuff for your Chao

HOW TIMES CHANGE

But it's true. So true, in fact, that Sonic Adventure 2: Battle on GameCube and Sonic Advance on GBA are already on sale in Japan, marking the beginning of a long-term relationship between old rivals Nintendo and Sega. Although Sega's Super Monkey Ball was a GC launch title, the arrival of the company's most recognised and respected hero on Nintendo's new consoles is a bold step which would have seemed unthinkable during the 16-bit era.

Of course, this blissful partnership is far from exclusive, and it seems like Sega has become a right old slapper. Just look at the way it's been flirting with Sony and Microsoft, with important licences such as Crazy Taxi, Shenmue and Jet Set Radio already beginning to appear on the PS2 and Xbox.

But while Sony and Microsoft can give Sega a platform in people's lounges, only Nintendo can offer Sonic a place on players' tellies *and* in the palm of their hand. GBA's dominance of the handheld market means that there's something special about the romantic coupling 'twixt Nintendo and Sega, making Sonic Advance one of the most exciting and anticipated portable games we've heard about for ages.

Anyone who's enjoyed the adrenalin rush of playing one of the old Mega Drive Sonic game will feel immediately at home with the blue streak's GBA debut when it arrives later this year.

SUPER PORTABLE SONIC

Sonic Advance adopts the same blindingly fast, super-colourful, 2D side-scrolling style as the classic 16-bit quests. Even better, while gamers have struggled to master Sonic in his hyper-speed 3D Dreamcast updates, this handheld edition resurrects the precise 2D Hedgehog control from yesteryear. All of which means you should feel in complete command of your spiky blue sprite, even when he's bouncing around the screen like a pinball.

To spice up the classic gameplay many new features have been added to the whirlwind levels. So along with all the regular speed-ups, shaky bridges and revolving platforms we're used to from previous 2D Sonic incarnations, there are now flag poles to bounce off and rails which Sonic can grind down. Using these devices is often the key to reaching hidden

Knuckles glides around the levels as he searches for pieces of the broken Chaos Emerald

In both of Sonic's new Nintendo games he can grind down rails using his cool trainers

➲ Now transfer your Chao back into SA2: Battle and try some challenges

➲ Give your Chao presents to make it powerful and more likely to win races

You can even let your creature get aggressive in Chao Karate, a GameCube exclusive

Using his sharp claws, Knuckles is able to climb along the sides of vertical structures

Useful items are often hidden behind crates, so make sure you smash them all

treasures, encouraging players to revisit levels and grab hidden items.

But while the core gameplay is largely unchanged from the Mega Drive era, this latest edition boasts the same bold and distinctive design style as its Dreamcast cousin. Rather than a cute, cuddly character who cheekily taps his foot when idle, Sonic has been transformed into a spiky, contemporary, bad ass mutha with bags of attitude. If you stand still for a nanosecond Sonic will impatiently scratch his foot on the ground, desperate to hit top speed again. Sonic games have traditionally been the platformer of choice for cool kids, and this portable edition just oozes personality from every pore.

Sonic's GBA quest is arguably a lot more impressive than any of Mario's handheld efforts to date. While Super Mario Advance and its forthcoming sequel are essentially tarted-up NES games with twee, 80s-style graphics, Sonic Advance is a totally novel experience with a modern look and new elements which evolve the successful Hedgehog formula.

It's unlikely that Miyamoto and his mates would ever admit it but, in terms of portable platforming, Sega has kicked Nintendo's ass in its own backyard.

SONIC GETS CUBED

Sonic Adventure 2: Battle is the first time that Sega's favoured son has appeared on a Nintendo home console, and it's remarkable that he's made the leap onto GameCube before Mario. But while GBA Sonic has eager gamers reaching for the Kleenex, we don't fancy the GameCube's so much.

The game is identical to last year's Dreamcast edition; although minor changes have been made to the graphics, only obsessives will spot them. And as it's exactly the same game, this version comes complete with all the niggling problems which made Sonic's DC adventures so damned frustrating.

What are these annoyances? Well, in a nutshell, the action's so fast that you'll often feel out of control, with entire sections seeming to run on rails. The levels which feature Sonic and Shadow are imaginative, fast and exhilarating, but all the others are repetitive and even tedious at times. Worst of all, the camera doesn't seem to have any interest in what you're doing, forcing you to fall to your doom time after time as it struggles to follow the speedy action.

To warrant its Battle tag, this version

CALLING ALL THE HEROES

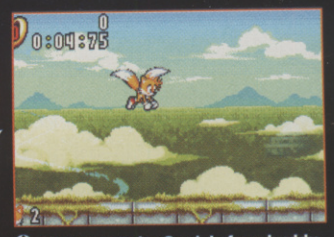
You can choose between Hero and Dark characters when playing Sonic Adventure 2, but the animal magic doesn't end there as Amy, Tails and Knuckles are also playable in the GBA edition.

Tails the fox can hover momentarily, using his furry rotors to give him time to avoid nasty falls. Knuckles the echidna can glide and use his sharp claws to climb walls. Amy the cat doesn't have any flying abilities, but she can use her hefty mallet to pound nasties into a pulp. Even more useful, she can execute a nifty somersault to reach higher platforms the others can't access.

SONIC

As in his Mega Drive adventures, Sonic's a cinch to control as he burns around the levels

TAILS

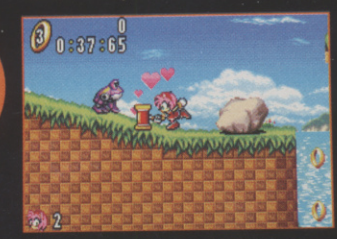


You can make Sonic's foxy buddy hover using his rotor tails. Good for avoiding fatal falls

KNUCKLES

Controlling Knuckles is cool as he can glide across the levels and make like Spider-Man up walls

AMY



Amy's mallet may stream love hearts, but it certainly gives the robots a good pounding

GAMECUBE MULTIPLAYER

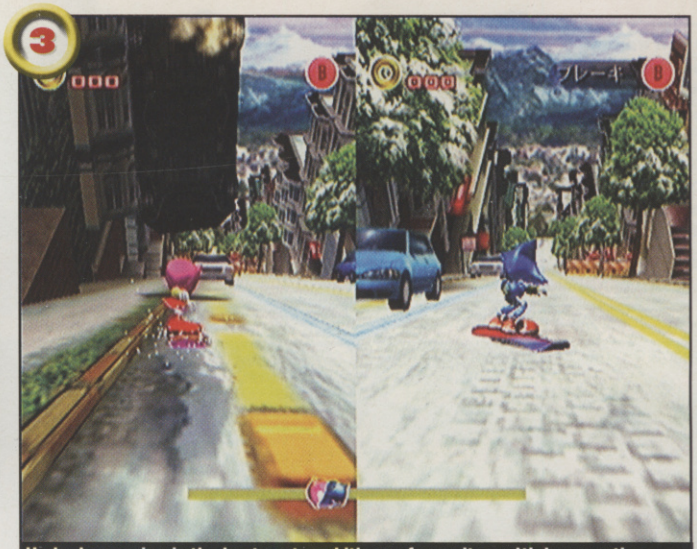
SA2: Battle features several new multiplayer games. You're given the options of going head to head in Sonic and Shadow's races, joining Rouge and Knuckles' treasure hunt or trying your hand at some shooting with Dr Eggman and Tails.

A 'Cube exclusive option is Kart Race, in which you can go head to head in split-screen scrambles for the chequered flag.

None of these games support four players, so it looks like SA2: Battle just isn't worth considering for its multiplayer options alone.

Lock-on shooting is dull in single-player, and it doesn't get much more exciting with two of you

Treasure hunts are better with two players as competition gives the gameplay better pace



Hedgehog racing is the best part, and it's our favourite multiplayer option

also features a host of new multiplayer games and the ability to link with Sonic Advance on GBA, and you can read more about these features elsewhere in this preview.

In short, if the Japanese versions are anything to go by, Sonic Adventure 2: Battle doesn't cut it on the 'Cube, even if Sonic Advance is one of the most impressive GBA titles. The graphics look bland in comparison to other GC releases, and the fiddly controls and appalling camera make the game feel dated. We'd welcome an original Sonic game on Nintendo's new home console, but this particular adventure should have been allowed to sink with the Dreamcast.

3D MARIO VS. SONIC

Mario and Sonic are still the most recognised icons in videogaming. But while the Italian Stallion's games have evolved and embraced 3D technology successfully, Sonic is still struggling to function in the third dimension, a fact illustrated by his more recent home console outings.

Sonic Advance is sure to be an instant classic, with the same speed, attitude and colour which gave Mario's 16-bit adventures a serious run for their money. But while Nintendo managed to nail 3D gaming first time with Super Mario 64, Sega still hasn't managed to successfully translate Sonic's blistering quests into a 3D environment.

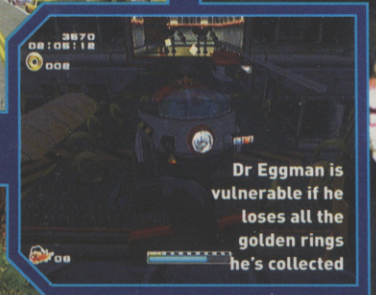
In fact, it's questionable whether Sonic's traditional levels will ever work in 3D as they're basically straight-forward races to a finish line, compared with Mario's puzzle-based antics, which are ideally suited to large, non-linear 3D worlds where you get time to think things over. If Sega wants its blue buddy to stand the test of time it will have to go back to the drawing board, as Nintendo's forthcoming Mario Sunshine is certain to make SA2: Battle look dated, awkward and rather silly.

But in terms of 2D games the eternal battle between Mario and Sonic still rages. After being blown away by Sonic Advance we now need some knockout Nintendo news to keep us interested in Mario's next portable platformer. Wait a minute, turn to page 102. Hot damn!

CVG RECKONS

While Sonic Adventure is sure to be a major hit when it reaches British shores, don't expect the Hedgehog's GameCube debut to set the world on fire.

Sonic has to slide down busy streets on a snowboard



Dr Eggman is vulnerable if he loses all the golden rings he's collected

Rouge the bat clings to this turtle to get around

With the canny use of his nifty laser, Dr Eggman can lock on all the enemies in a room

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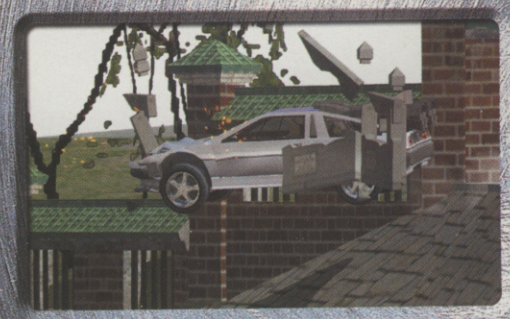

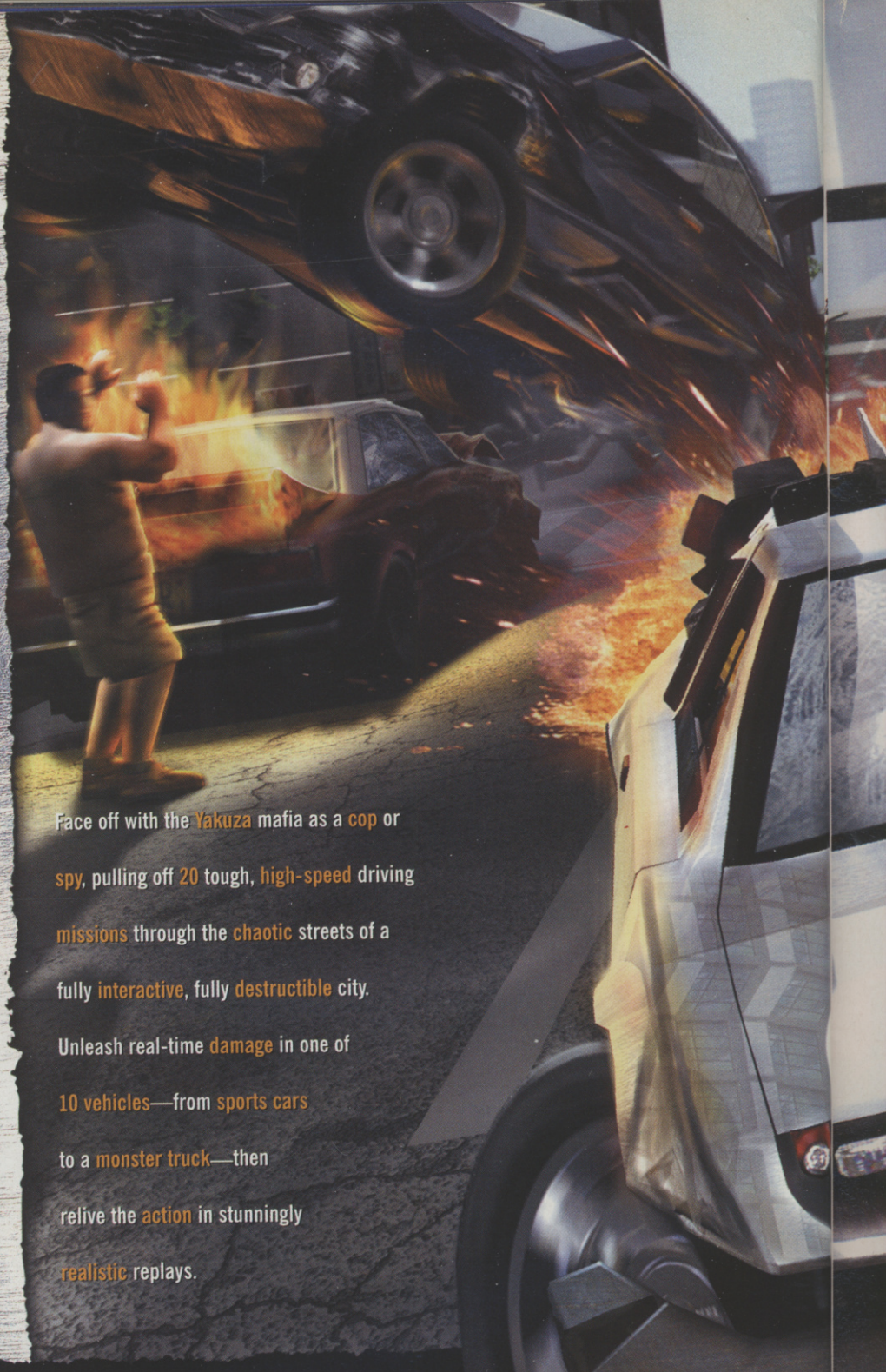

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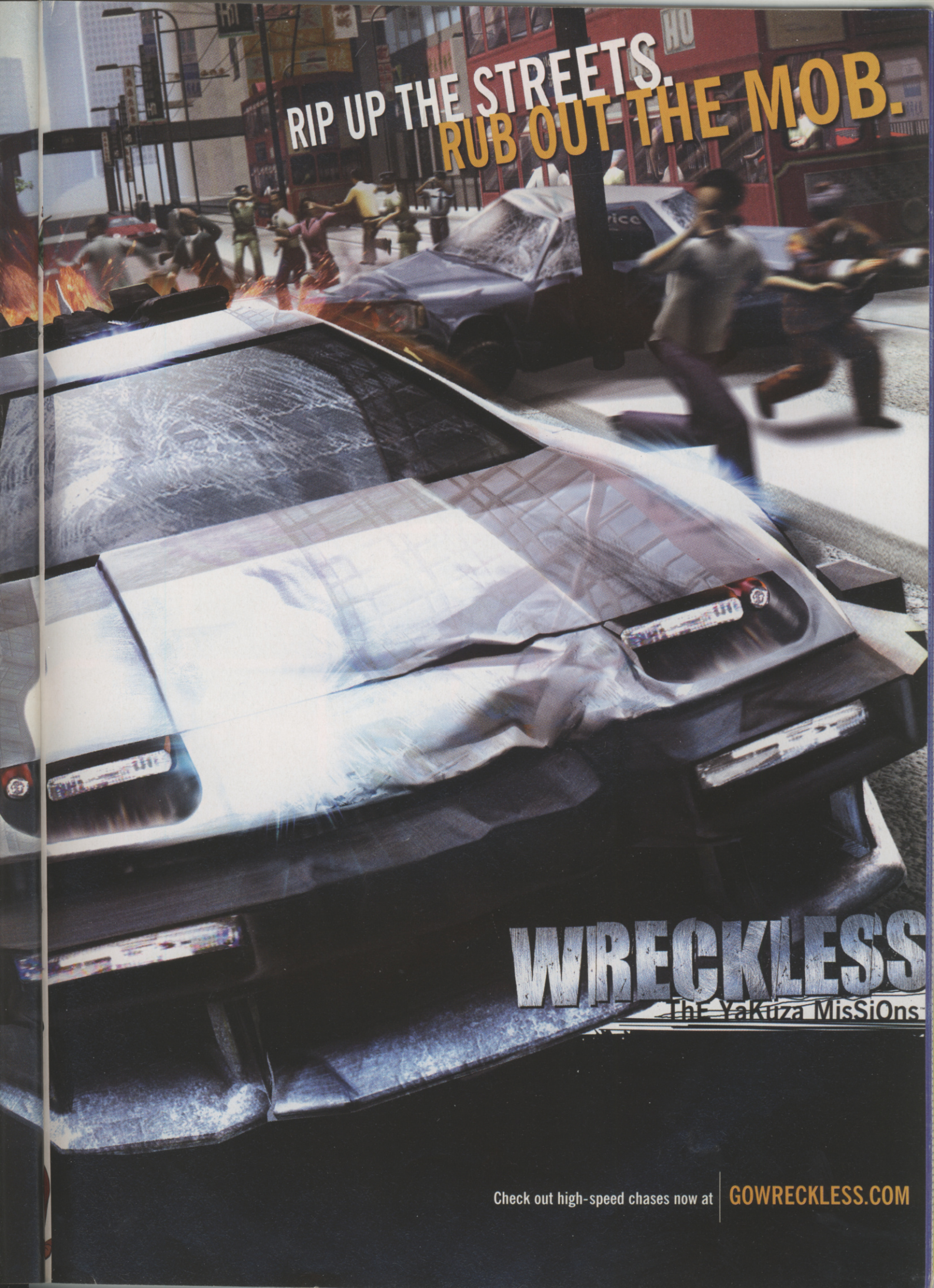
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WHAT THE SCORES MEAN

1 – Argh, it stinks!
2 – Abysmal
3 – Sucks a fat one
4 – Pretty dire
5 – Very average
6 – Hmm, could be for you
7 – Pretty tasty
8 – Very good
9 – Essential
10 – An unmissable belter that defines the genre

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Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons Of Liberty

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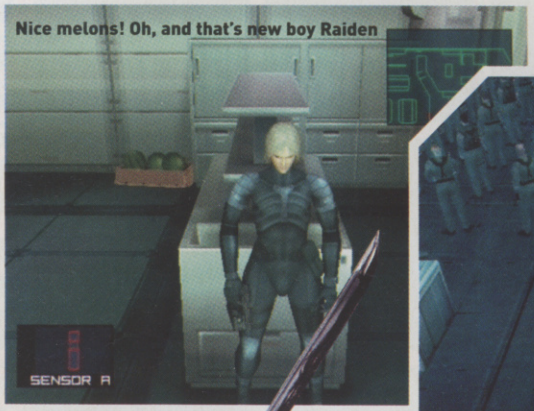
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**

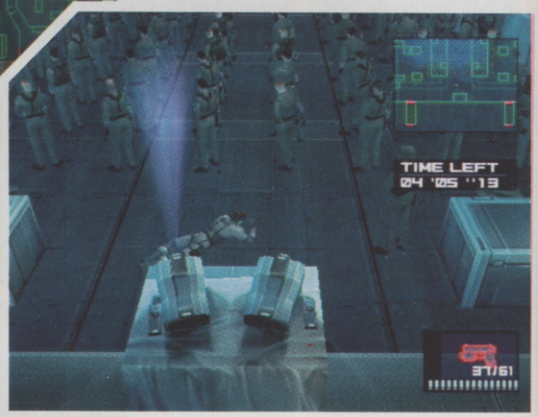
Snake's dead! No, Snake's alive! Wait, Snake's the enemy. But I'm Snake? Oh, now I'm somebody else. Now I'm the enemy and Snake's the hero. Snake's on my side. Snake's on their side. Who's who? Help me! Arrgghh!

Did you really expect the most anticipated videogame of the millennium to have a straightforward plot? Actually, everything about the game is pretty unconventional. You could argue against this being called a videogame at all: MGS2 is what happens when videogames and movies meet, and you spend almost as much time watching as you do playing.

The cutscenes show off PS2's graphical grunt, imagining up a twist-laden espionage thriller where you are the star. If you want to hate it because the experience isn't delivered 100 per cent in the gameplay, fine. The review ends here for you – go out and buy Mario Advance 2 instead.



Nice melons! Oh, and that's new boy Raiden



Snake sneaking past an entire army. One rogue fart and he's finished. Hold it in, Snake

Holding up guards for their dog tags adds considerable replay value

STEALTHY EQUALS HEALTHY

By now you should know what Metal Gear games are about. You're a lone agent, going up against enemy forces that outnumber you dramatically. A gung-ho attitude will earn you a quick death, and the only way to progress is to avoid drawing attention to yourself.

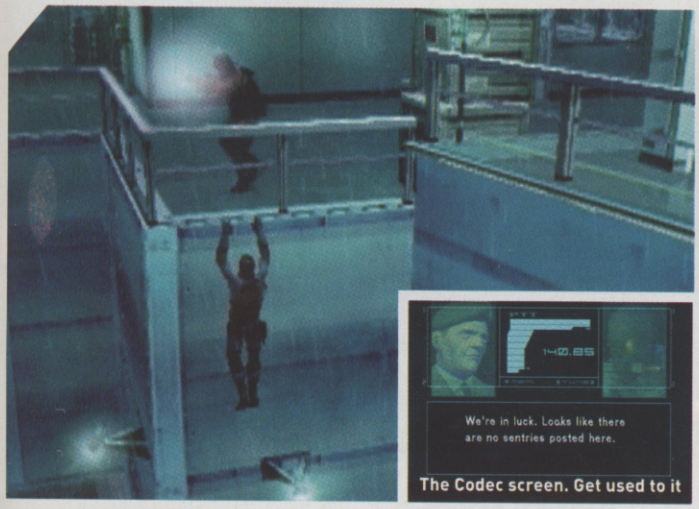
The venue for your sneakage is a giant offshore oil decontamination facility called Big Shell. You play not as Solid Snake, but an equally able operative called Raiden. Head for our 'What Happened To Snake?' boxout if this is a big newsflash to you.

He's lost enough blood to drown a horse, but he's still sleeping?

Solid Snake is in this room. Can you guess where, kids?

A dead guard, presented in glorious Box-O-Vision

You can only hang for so long. Hope that guard gives up looking and walks away



The Codec screen. Get used to it

Spy cams are a pain in the arse. A chaff grenade lets you slip past...

...had it seen you, a fully tooled up assault team would be on the way

No other game gives you such a genuine sense of dread that you're going to be discovered. You're hiding inside a locker as a guard team investigates the bloody mess you left in the corridor. A heartbeat throbs through the pad, quickening as the door slides open and an armed guard enters. He's trying the lockers. He's just closed the neighbouring locker and is reaching for yours when a command comes over the radio, "Return to your positions". A lucky escape.

NIGHTY NIGHT, MR GUARD

You've got to be careful not to get caught. Hide every dead body, don't leave footprints, and make sure your shadow's not giving you away as you stand with your back pressed to the wall in a doorway ready to spin out and strike.

Of course, most weapons make a noise too, so you'll be using the silenced tranquilliser gun a lot. Aim in a cool first-person mode, and place the red IR bead on a distant soldier's head. Squeeze the trigger, and it's nighty night Mr Guard. An enemy removed the stealthy way.

A plastic duck. Look for it

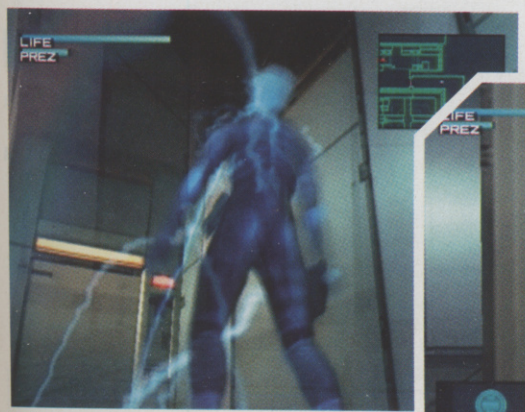
CVG FACT

Early rumours hinted at a lot of gunplay in and around New York. Changes were made to the game following the terrorist attacks of Sept 11 2001, so we're praying for a Director's Cut in future.

Well, not quite. Every soldier reports back to his commanding officers by radio, and doped soldiers aren't the most talkative fellas in the army. Either find the radio on his body and destroy it, or get the hell out of there before they send in an assault team to investigate.

The same level of detail applies to interactions with the environment. Shoot magazines and they tear, upturned sugar pots spill cubes everywhere, fire extinguishers spray foam, leaves fall off plants. And that's just one room.

It almost goes without saying that this is the finest looking PS2 game yet. The cutscenes look amazing, and they're all drawn in PS2 graphics. You can zoom in and out of them if it helps you believe it.



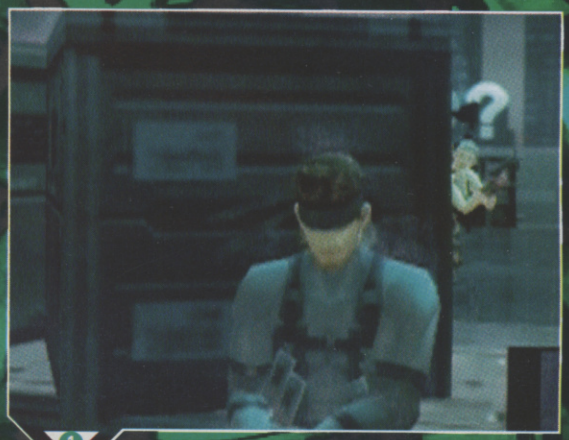
Because humans don't recharge like batteries, stay away from electric floors

Anything to avoid putting a 50p in the slot

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO SNAKE?

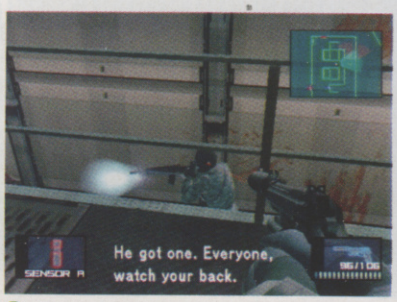
Look at the screens on these pages. Judging by that hair, it looks like Solid Snake's taken his love of '80s rock bands just a bit too far. Except that's not Solid Snake. After you complete the Tanker episode that featured in the MGS2 demo bundled with Zone Of The Enders, the game proper begins with a new star. Of course, he goes out with a bang...

Finish off the lovely Olga, and get down to the new bits



The bowels of the ship are heaving with soldiers, so be careful

Take shots of the new Metal Gear and send them to Otacon



Those are wise words, mate. Shame they're the last you'll ever speak

Sonically it's impressive too. The score in the movie sections belts out in Dolby Digital. When we said Metal Gear 2 was a mixture of movie and game, we meant the overall production as well as the plot.

REVEALING RAIDEN

No game has told a story as twisty and involving as this one. The Final Fantasy games may take you on an emotional rollercoaster ride, but it hurts your brain to keep up with the twists MGS2 throws up in every Codec message and widescreen movie section. From one minute to the next you've got different ideas about who the enemy is, and what you're really doing there.

This works because you haven't got a clue who Raiden really is. His identity is revealed as you play. It couldn't be nearly as involving with Snake in the lead role, because you already know what he's all

about. You need to sit through the game at least twice to have a full handle on the plot, and it's going to prove incomprehensible to younger players.

It can be a pain in the arse reading through the longer Codec messages to see what's happening next, and the desire to get back to the amazing gameplay will make you impatient even during the best movie sequences. It's unavoidable with a game this close to being a movie, so you've got to savour it. And there's a ton of brilliant gameplay wrapped up in these cinema-rivalling visuals.

HEAVY ARTILLERY

The central premise of playing hide and seek with intelligent guards is more exciting than in the PSone game. Being able to aim shots from a first-person view sucks you even deeper into the action, to the point where the musical burst that signals you've been spotted has you jumping out of your skin. Of course, there's more to the game than sneaking. Otherwise you wouldn't need the Nikita missile launcher, the AKS-74u machine-gun, the rocket launcher or the sniper rifle. Nope, all you'd need would be a nice quiet pair of shoes.

But often you face situations you can't tiptoe around, and have to meet head-on with heavy artillery. Every boss battle requires a different strategy and you'll be glad of a 14-weapon armoury when confronted by a Harrier Jump Jet or a squad of three Metal Gear robots.

SNAKE 'N' VAC

The boss battles aren't as ingenious as the Psycho Mantis encounter of the last game, but it's a lot of fun trying to work out the ways to kill a mad bomber in an explosion-proof jacket, and a lady with a cannon who apparently can't be hit by bullets.

Elsewhere, you have to provide sniper cover fire as a delicate female scuttles across a thin bridge besieged by flying sentry droids. Luckily, you can call on Solid Snake's help for that part.

The aftermath of the first appearance of boss character Vamp

"I'm over here you gimp"

Plates and glasses. Smash them all

Just hanging around

Cool backpack. Nike?

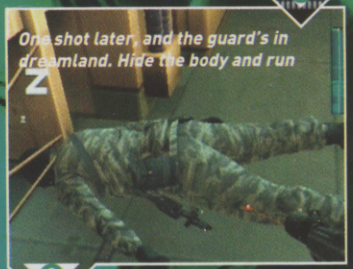
TRANQ DARTS AND PORN MAGS

As you've probably gathered by now, Metal Gear Solid 2 is essentially all about sneaking around to the best of your stealthy ability. The smaller the number of times you get yourself spotted, the less you get streams of life-taking hot lead aimed at your head and body. And if you find you really can't time your runs to swerve past those guards, you're just going to have to take them out of the equation in some other way, aren't you...?

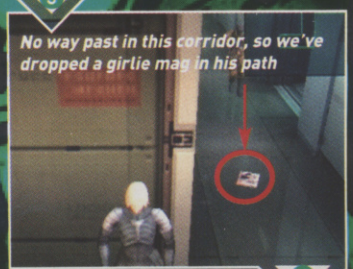
Have a look where the guard walks. Pay close attention, then spin out when his back's turned

Carefully sneak up behind him and line up that tranquilliser gun on the guard's head

One shot later, and the guard's in dreamland. Hide the body and run



No way past in this corridor, so we've dropped a girlie mag in his path



He'll sit there till he has to move

Just a simple matter of sliding along the way and past our porn-hungry friend

It was him out of Operation Winback!

What's going on? Large-scale killing

Oooh, objects. Show us your scope, Raiden

Snake encounters a man humping a big hairdryer

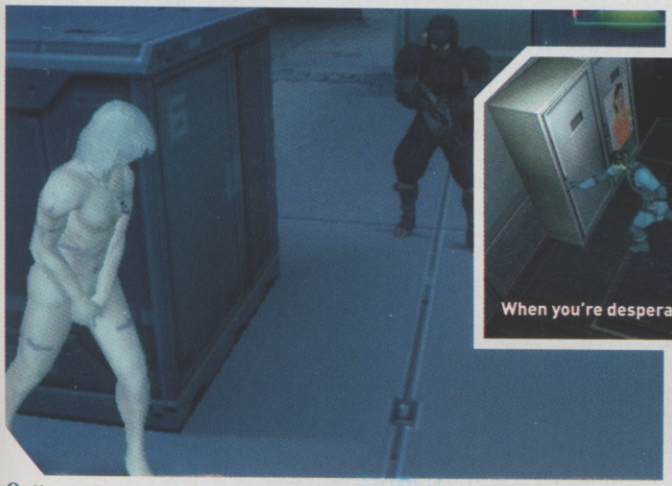
EUROPE'S HOT DEAL

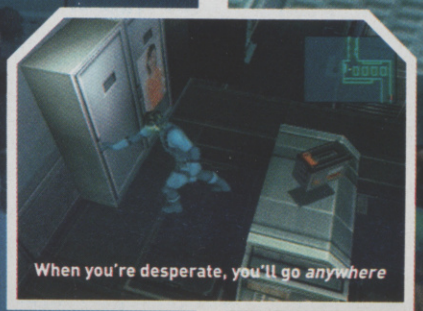
We'd hoped that the extra time spent on Europe's MGS2 might mean new missions. We do get stuff not included in the Japanese and US releases, but it's not an extension of the main story. As well as an Extreme difficulty setting, there's a casting theatre option and a mode that lets you fight all the bosses consecutively with either Snake or Raiden. Cool!

You can mess around with the character models in the PAL game

Kojima spills the beans in an interview on the bonus DVD

More guards, and getting seen once means game over. That's Extreme





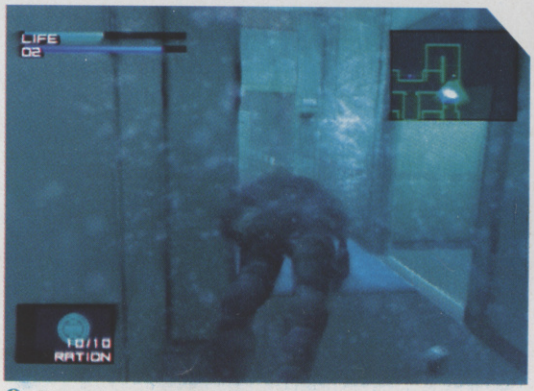
When you're desperate, you'll go *anywhere*

No matter how much we cartwheeled, we couldn't get a shot of his nuts

"And then there's the time I beat Psycho Mantis. Are you listening, Olga?"

Just because Snake's not the main character, doesn't mean he's not around. In fact, some of the biggest buzzes in playing come when one of gaming's most legendary characters drops by to give you a hand. There are also comeback performances from Otacon, Gray Fox and Revolver Ocelot to please fans of the first Metal Gear Solid.

The biggest gripe with the original game was its length. Skilled players could get through it in eight hours or so, and it's similar here. First time through, you're looking at a 12-15 hour stretch on Normal difficulty. You'll play again to see all the cool bits and make sure you've grasped every nuance of the plot.



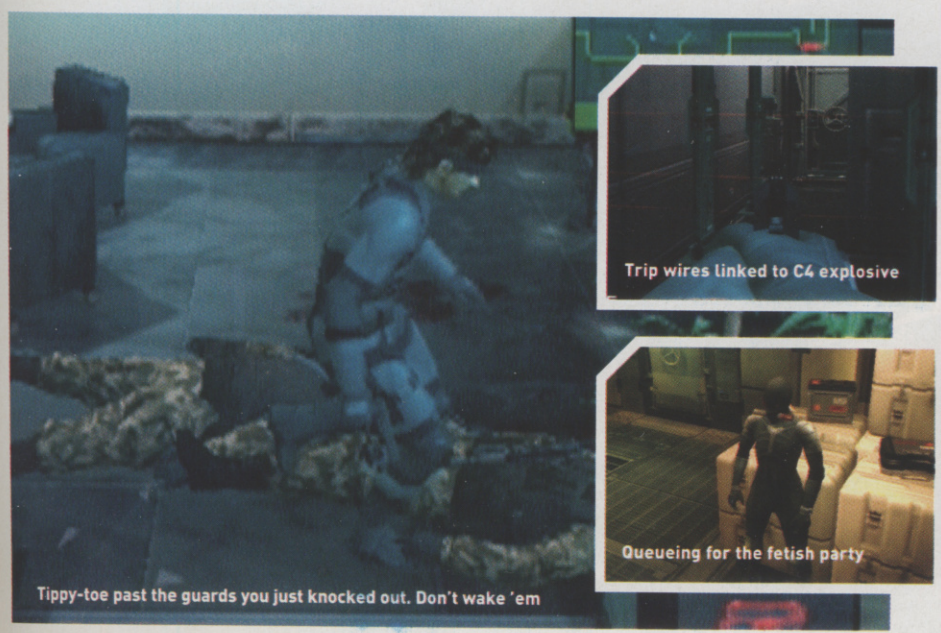
The underwater bits look absolutely amazing. You'll see

Keep it anyway. May come in handy.

Shouldn't encourage smoking, mister

But it's the Dog Tag game that will have you playing more. Every guard in the game has a set of tags with his name on, and you unlock special secrets the more you get. With a different set of tags for each level and guards hunting in packs, getting the tags is a completely different gameplay experience – more like a conventional videogame, you could say.

But MGS2 is no conventional game. It looks amazing, and is as engaging and exciting as any PS2 game yet. We were a little disappointed at parts of the plot, especially the ending, but it's still an essential play.



Tippy-toe past the guards you just knocked out. Don't wake 'em

Trip wires linked to C4 explosive

Queueing for the fetish party

CVG RECKONS

The most cinematic game ever, and thrilling to play. God gave you eyes and fingers for this. Dean

9

If you like this try this...
Headhunter (Dreamcast)

Oops, distracted by the water effect

Protect the bus from Yakuza nutters

You can't touch pedestrians, sadly

Smash into Yakuza cars in style

Wreckless

Want an Xbox? You will when you see this running

COST: **£44.99**
OUT: **MARCH 14**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **BUNKASHA**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**

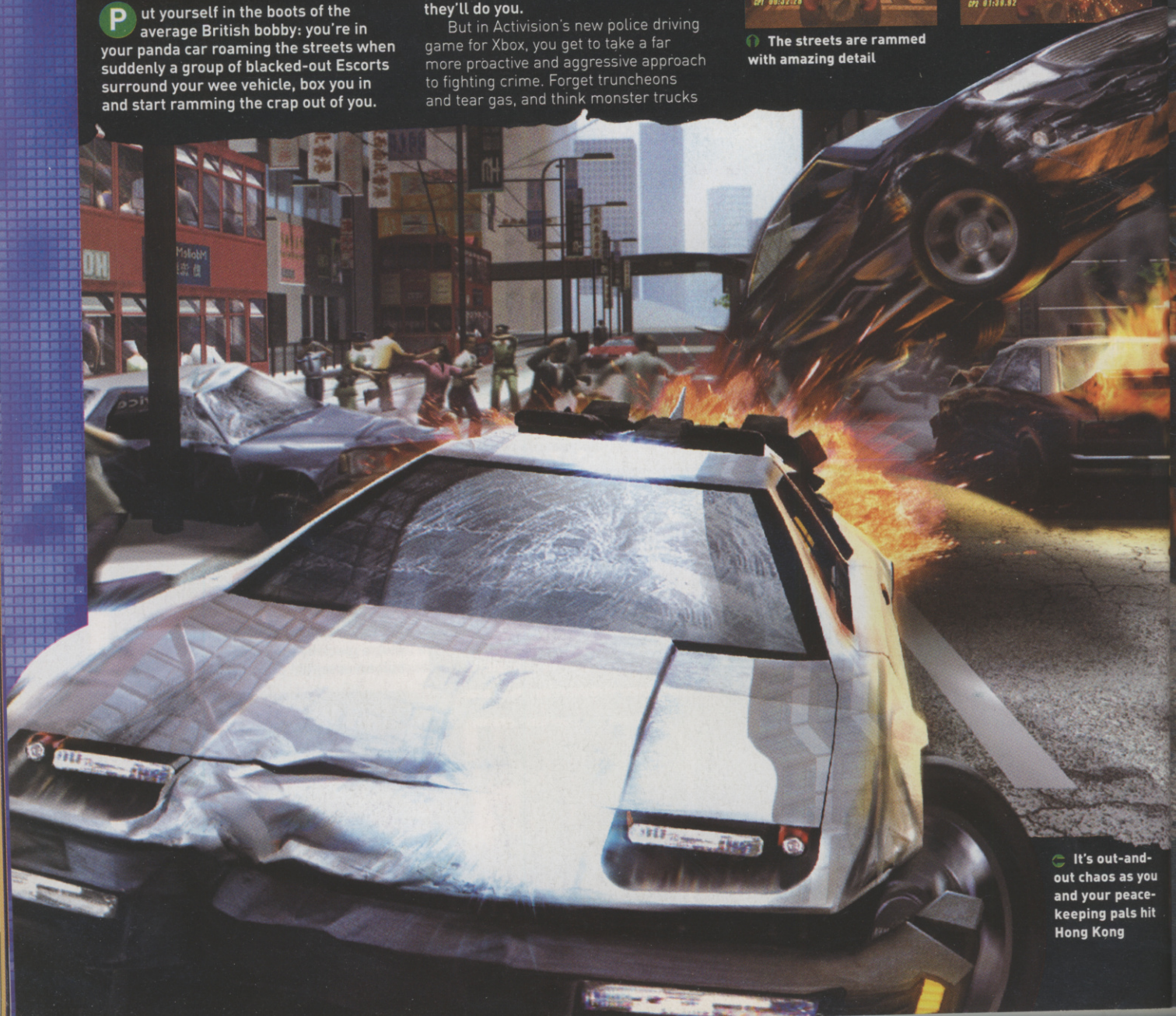
Put yourself in the boots of the average British bobby: you're in your panda car roaming the streets when suddenly a group of blacked-out Escorts surround your wee vehicle, box you in and start ramming the crap out of you.

All that you've got to defend yourself with is a standard-issue truncheon, a pair of handcuffs and some CS gas. Fact is, you might as well be armed with a banana, a stick of Brighton rock, and a can of Irn Bru for all the good they'll do you.

But in Activision's new police driving game for Xbox, you get to take a far more proactive and aggressive approach to fighting crime. Forget truncheons and tear gas, and think monster trucks

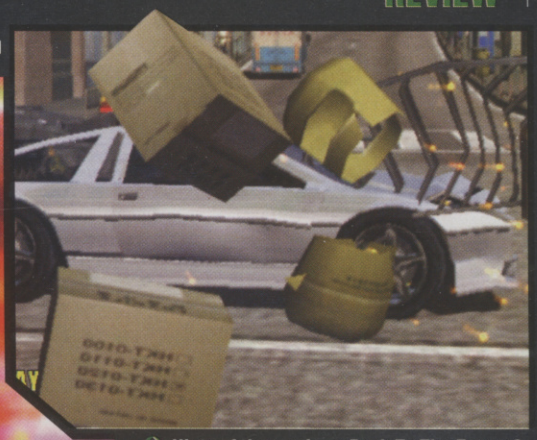
The streets are rammed with amazing detail

Mind the bodywork



It's out-and-out chaos as you and your peace-keeping pals hit Hong Kong

Even cruising the streets and taking in the sights is thrilling because the game looks so damn good



Hints of the car from Back To The Future?

Unlock some smart vehicles, like this gargantuan truck

The reflections on your car are brilliant

Save the replay to your Xbox hard drive

Clearly the British influence in Hong Kong still lingers

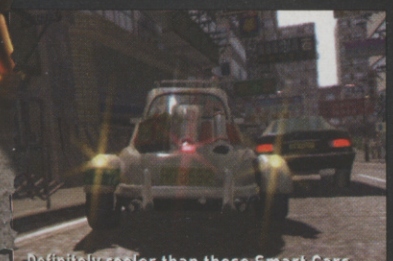
and tanks. That's right ladies and germs; this is peace-keeping with a difference!

GODZILLA'S A PUSSY

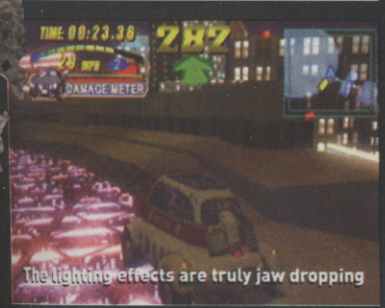
As part of an elite anti-Yakuza task force, your job is to release Hong Kong from the vice-like grip of organised crime. This means undertaking some crazily chaotic missions and partaking in the most insanely stunning city-smashing antics ever to appear on a console.

If you thought Godzilla was a demolition expert, wait till you're sat behind the wheel of an armoured monolith in Wreckless, ploughing through beautiful Chinese temples, tearing down construction sites, crushing cabs, and ripping jam-packed streets to shreds. Forget tactics, because this is simply a balls-out feast of ultimate chaos and car combat.

A bus needs a safe escort through the particularly perilous downtown streets of Hong Kong, where the mafia are out in force. It's up to you to tag along and fend off the hordes of shiny black Yakuza cars that are trying to destroy it so you hop into the Big-Truck, with its meaty six-foot tall tyres, and head off on a car-crushing crusade...



Definitely cooler than those Smart Cars



The lighting effects are truly jaw dropping

A hostile red blob appears on your map, indicating that trouble is on its way. Before you've got time to blink the bus is being attacked from all angles, so you tear into action and start obliterating the Yakuza cars one at a time by ramming them off the road, hitting them so hard they explode. While distracted in your efforts to annihilate a clan of cars, the bus has shot ahead around a bend, and is totally vulnerable.

Spotting a roadblock next to the road, you smash through it, like a scene from a Hollywood car chase, pelt through a well-hidden short cut, drive across a bridge and catch up with the bus in no time. This wild ride is what the action in Wreckless is all about – non-stop mayhem.

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

As you might have guessed by now, one of the main themes running through the game is to destroy Yakuza cars in a car combat stylee – ramming them until their damage meters hit zero and they explode.

Admittedly the gameplay is quite limited, but it's rarely dull because all the vehicles are mint and most of the missions are spiced up with kooky objectives. One example involves delivering blood packs to the hospital, in order to save the President's daughter within a tight time limit, while avoiding Yakuza attacks and ensuring you keep the blood packs in one piece.

You also conquer tight and windy assault courses, speed through tunnels and launch your car over concrete barriers on a rescue mission, and gather stolen plutonium then race it to special containment facilities guarded by men in geeky yellow biohazard suits. With a total of 20 missions, it'll be ages before you get bored with all the ace challenges on offer.

CVG FACT

This is Bunkasha's first game, but what's more interesting is that these guys are part of Bunkasha Publishing Company, which publishes Japanese porn. Sweet.

LIGHT AND MAGIC

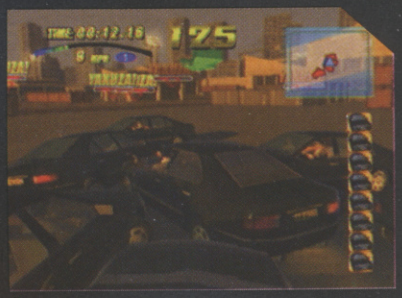
Before you start, make sure you're prepared for a full-scale assault on your senses, because Wreckless is blessed with retina-rupturing visuals quite unlike anything you'll have seen before. As you blitz your way through the neon metropolis of Hong Kong at night it's possible that you will puke with excitement at the graphical magic that's unfolding before your eyes.

Every frame of action is stuffed with stylish graphical gorgeousness: mind-blowing heat effects fill the screen as you obliterate flammable objects; fountains of colourful sparks explode as you ram through neon lights that reflect off the bodywork of your vehicle, culminating in an electric atmosphere that you could cut with a knife. Simply cruising freely through the massive and marvellous city is a treat on its own.

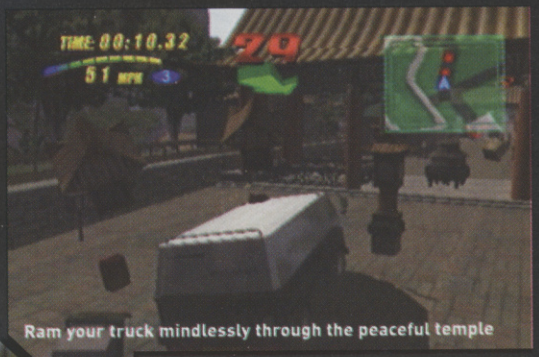
BUGGED BUT NOT BUG-GERED

All this beauty is mildly tainted by the fact that there are a few glitches in the game. Now and again a car will disappear, and you can drive through trees. But considering Wreckless is pushing the boundaries of visual innovation, it's easy to overlook these minor flaws.

Precision driving skills are required for this mission

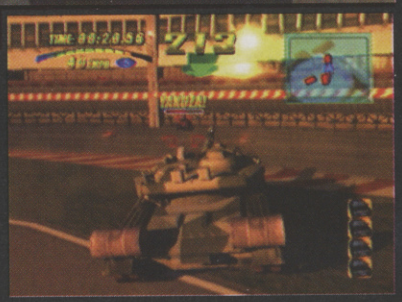


The annual car convention gets out of hand



Ram your truck mindlessly through the peaceful temple

Take out these shop signs and the sparks'll fly



Unlock and drive a tank that fires missiles!

But what's difficult to ignore is the fact that there isn't a multiplayer option. This truly is a sin – surely this would be one of the finest head-to-head car combat experiences imaginable.

Still, for all the fun that Wreckless throws at you in the single-player game, you should be able to forgive and forget... until Wreckless 2 shows up (this isn't a world-exclusive announcement, we just used CVG's trusty crystal ball to predict the inevitable). If you're planning on buying an Xbox and want a game to make your PS2-owning mates jealous, this is it.

CVG RECKONS

With its stunning in-game chaos, it's virtually impossible not to enjoy trashing Hong Kong in Wreckless. **Mike**

8

If you like this try this...
Burnout (PS2)

GLADIATORS READY!

Although the majority of the demolition action takes place in the streets of Hong Kong, some of the most frenzied destruction occurs outside the metropolis, in large arenas packed with enemy cars. There are several missions where you're thrown into basic brutal gladiatorial confrontations with Yakuza, but the developers have made sure to include some great little touches and sub-levels to keep the experience fresh.

There's a shipyard battle where you have to progress from pier to pier, obliterating masses of cars placed in ridiculous places. One of the last missions even has a sub-level in which you're forced to masterfully make your way through a cool mini assault course.

Face the Yakuza fleet to unleash hell

Smash anything that moves...

Don't take too long negotiating the awkward terrain or you'll run out of time and fail the mission

Once you've annihilated lots of enemies, a new section opens to test your precision driving skills

But don't get backed into a corner or you could get flipped, causing you to lose precious time

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**

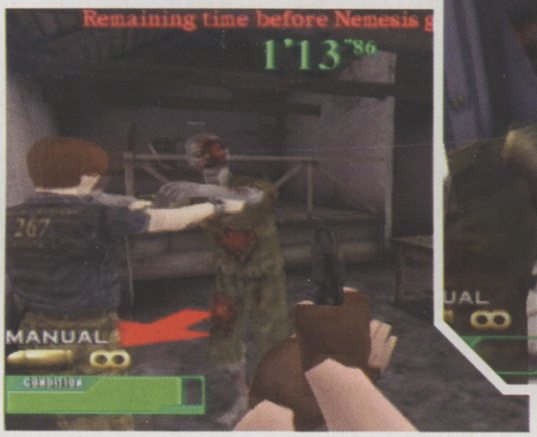
Resident Evil Survivor 2 Code: Veronica

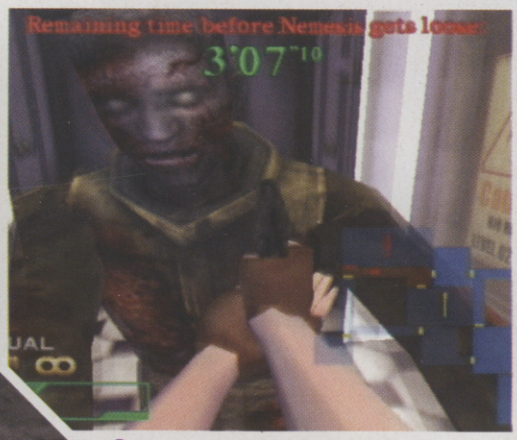
A terrible name for a terrible game

It's undeniably a golden idea: you play through a selection of spooky Resident Evil Code: Veronica environments, blasting large holes in the undead in a first-person lightgun shoot 'em up. You even get the chance to control your hero's movement via the Dpad or the side buttons on the gun. Or at least you might, providing you have crazy claw-hands and the mental ability to defy all current laws of hand-eye co-ordination.

Shooting zombies dead is just about manageable. But actually using the buttons on the gun to move about is hopeless. Add to this the fact that the game automatically looks down at your feet when some foul creature is near, and you'll begin to understand why any kind of tactical strafing or ducking out of the way of an attack is nigh-on impossible. The game is a touch more playable with the joypad, but ask yourself this: what sort of lightgun game is easier to play with a joypad than with an actual gun? The pony kind, that's what. And unfortunately, that's exactly what Survivor 2 is.

Choose to play as Claire or Steve. Or not at all





There's very little fear, zero tension and even fewer thrills. Er, what's the point?

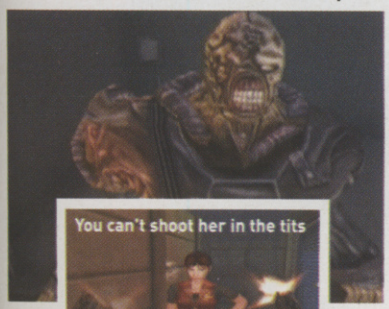
The on-screen map is quite handy

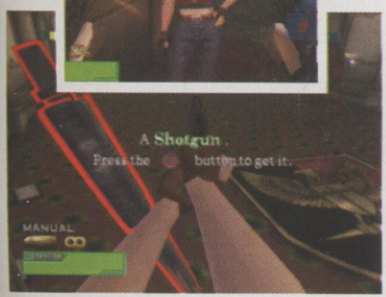
SHOCKING AND SHODDY

It's not just the controls that stink, either. The main Arcade mode is split into simple search missions but each of the individual rooms you fight through takes ages to load in and, on average, about four seconds to run through while you try to avoid the zombies.

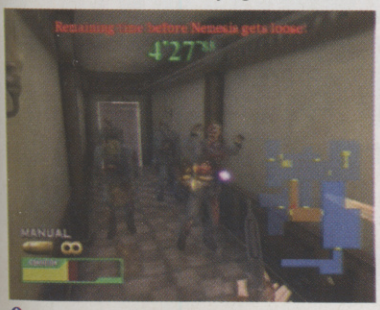
There's also a frustrating time limit to overcome; it ticks down and if it reaches zero you've had it – the Nemesis launches his attack. Except that all he does is materialise in front of your eyes and kill you, before blinking out of existence again. Whoops.

The Nemesis will kill then vanish. Hooplah!





Loads of items are left lying around



It seems not to matter where you shoot 'em

CVG FACT

Complete the original Code: Veronica and you unlock a first-person mode that plays miles better than this

CVG RECKONS

Fails in its mission and ends up an unplayable mess of a game – each and every soul-destroying step of the way. Lee

3

If you like this try this...
Ghoul Panic (PSone)

ANY ALTERNATIVES?

Don't waste your time with Survivor 2. There was a game called Ghoul Panic by Namco on PSone that did the 'exploring a haunted mansion with a lightgun' thing in a much more entertaining way and was fun as well as being funny. It had talking cats in it, y'see? Or you could try Sega's seminal House Of The Dead 2 on Dreamcast.

Skellies, skellies, and more skellies! Sega's House Of The Dead 2 rules. Survivor 2 doesn't. Simple as that

Ghoul Panic is class comedy shooting

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Game Boy™ Color and Game Boy Advance™ are registered trademarks of Nintendo Co. Ltd.. © Nintendo 2002. 'My name is' Written by Labi Siffre. Published by Chrysalis Music Limited

Vampire Night

A lightgun game with real bite

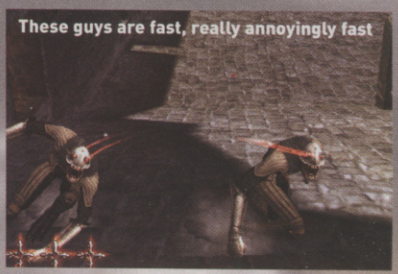
COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **APRIL**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **WOW ENTERTAINMENT**
PUBLISHER: **SONY**

It's tough being a vampire these days. Thanks to the movies everyone knows how to kill you, and with the craze for healthy food you have to put up with flavourless fat-free blood. And because of those Madonna clones wearing crucifixes, you can't even grab a tasty young wench when you find one. It's a wonder the world's bloodsuckers haven't all starved to (un)death. Now, to top it all, Sony has changed the rules so even lightguns can kill us. Sorry, *them*.

That's gonna leave a scar

Okay, enough. I think he's dead – again

What other game lets you shoot a Pretzel?



These guys are fast, really annoyingly fast

PAIN IN THE NECK

Gun games are hardly renowned for innovation – you point, shoot and repeat. The goal is the same, it's just the targets and locations that vary. This is mainly due to the coin-op conversion nature of the games. In Vampire Night, Sony is at least trying to make it more than a ten-minute blast, because you get the normal Arcade mode and a bunch of training games to improve your trigger finger and your aim.

But the PS2 exclusive Special mode is where you'll be spending the bulk of your gun-toting time. This is the Arcade mode's 'shoot 'em in the weak spot' action, but with a whiff of role-playing woven in. You'll meet people and when you save them they'll give you tasks. Find the object or kill the chosen target and you'll receive weapons upgrades. It pretty much boils down to adding a few extra sidelines to the on-rail action, but it certainly adds to the challenge and replayability.

It may not be Final Fantasy in complexity or plot (although there is a cool twist regarding the two characters you can play as), but it certainly has more than its share of luscious eye-candy, with huge gothic locations and an overdose of special effects. It's not just your neck that will be bleeding – your eyes will be too.

Shoot the parasite before it possesses him

REPOSSESSED

It's not just a case of shooting blindly, knowing that you'll get your target eventually. Some villagers run at you with parasites attached to them, so you have to be really precise in order to save their lives... or you're sure to suffer the consequences.

No, he's not singing opera – something's growing on him

Too late. Life's about to get interesting for you

The parasite turns him into another monster

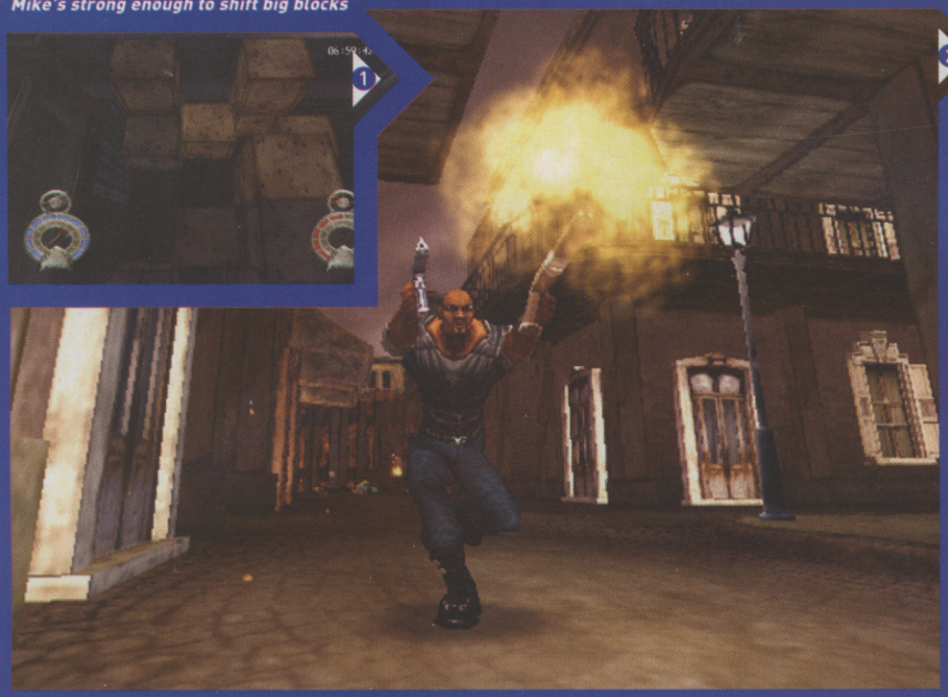
CVG RECKONS

Just when you thought it was safe to lock up your lightgun, a gun game comes along that actually tries to do something different. You've finished Time Crisis 2 by now, so give this a go. Les

8

If you like this try these...
House Of The Dead 2 (DC), Time Crisis 2 (PS2)

Mike's strong enough to shift big blocks

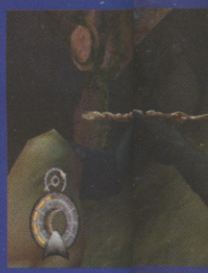


All of the game's environments have secrets and new areas to find, often by blasting barrels out of the way

At dusk, Mike transforms into Shadow Man

TWICE THE TROUBLE

Many of the game's action-based puzzles involve switching between Mike and Shadow Man so you can use their different abilities to find a solution. Mike takes care of the strong-arm stuff, while Shadow Man brings some incredible voodoo magic to the party.



Most useful of

swim without

all, h

need

Shadow Man 2econd Coming

Nevermind Game Over – you start this baby already dead

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **MARCH 1**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**

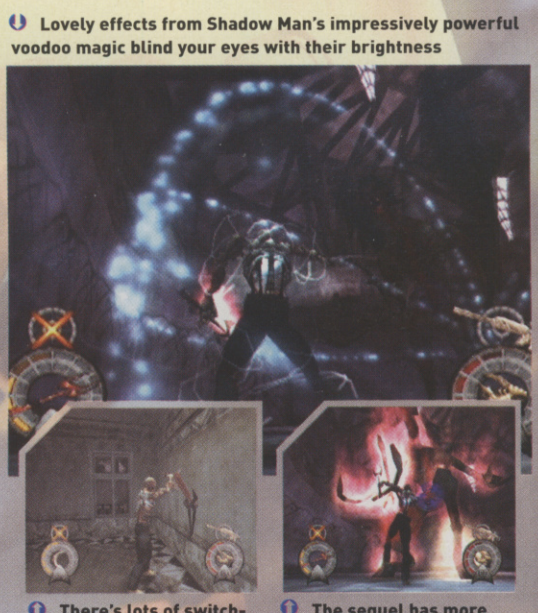
How much guts do you reckon you have? Enough to break into the local community centre and leave a dog-egg calling-card on the lino? Or maybe you think you've got a stomach steely enough to graffiti a big, leaky willy onto your neighbour's front door?

Shadow Man, on the other hand, has got no guts at all. He's got an empty ribcage and a glowing ball of light where his innards should be. But he's harder than you, and to prove it he's going to take on the might of the Underworld and prevent Armageddon. In comparison, you're just a big girl's blouse.

THE PLOT IS LOST

All hell is breaking loose. A demon called Morteth has been whipping up a bunch of evil entities called the Grigori Sephiroth into the creamiest of froths. Their plan?

Lovely effects from Shadow Man's impressively powerful voodoo magic blind your eyes with their brightness



There's lots of switch-pulling to be done

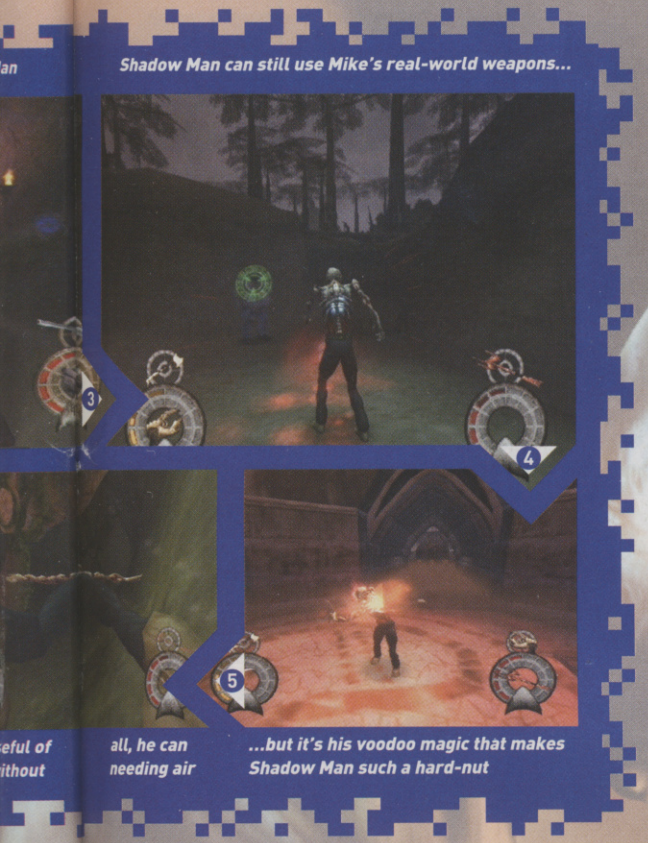
The sequel has more boss fights than before

To bring about the end of the world. Shadow Man is the only hero out there who can fight in both the world of the living and the world of the dead, or 'Deadside'. It's up to you to guide him through the enormous game world, solving puzzles, collecting explosive voodoo weapons and taking out wave after wave of human and not-so-human scum.

CAN I PLAY WITH MADNESS?

2econd Coming is a lot more linear than the first game. Each of the game's seven main areas, such as Louisiana and Russia, is split up by challenges and objective-led levels. Sometimes you have to sniff out mystical artifacts or new weapons to let you access new areas of the game. Other times you'll need to take on hordes of devil-spawn as you try to solve the switch-pulling puzzles in more traditional platform game-style areas.

The variation in 2econd Coming is a big part of the fun and there's an loads of items to find and use. While not necessary, backtracking to old areas with your new skills often yields new rewards,



Shadow Man can still use Mike's real-world weapons...

...but it's his voodoo magic that makes Shadow Man such a hard-nut

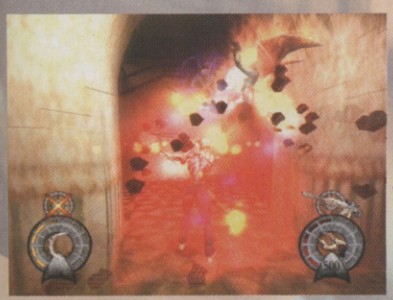
all, he can needing air

eful of ithout

The floor and ceiling swirl about you in The Pit. Liable to induce vomiting among the weak

There are special effects in spades

Warp back to previous locations



Gory gibs drench the screen in claret

from health boosts to extra voodoo powers to use in battle.

GUNS, FISTS, VOODOO HOODOO

Shoot-outs are fast-paced but brainless, and often involve nothing more than hopping backwards while unloading into the oncoming beasties. Disappointing, given the wild weapons at your disposal.

The way your hero scampers about the levels like a bony chimp is annoying, and the control system would be more suited to an FPS. There are also moments of intense frustration. Why? Because the levels and puzzles have been so sneakily designed that it's all too easy to overlook important switches and hidden passages, obscured by the muddy textures of the game environment. Worse still, when you get stuck, you can't even get help from the people you've met, as they seem to suddenly lose all ability to communicate outside of cutscenes. Idiots.

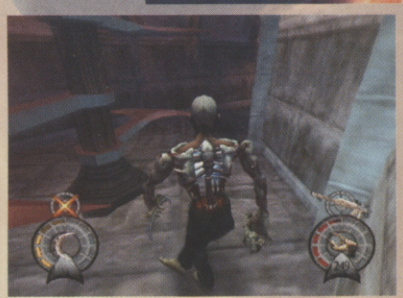
Despite the iffy bits though, 2econd Coming is a still good game. If you put in a little effort to see past the flaws, you're likely to have as good a time as you can expect from a PS2 adventure outside MGS2.

CVG FACT

Crusty Brit actor Sean Pertwee (Smith in Event Horizon) provides the voice of Asmodeus in the game

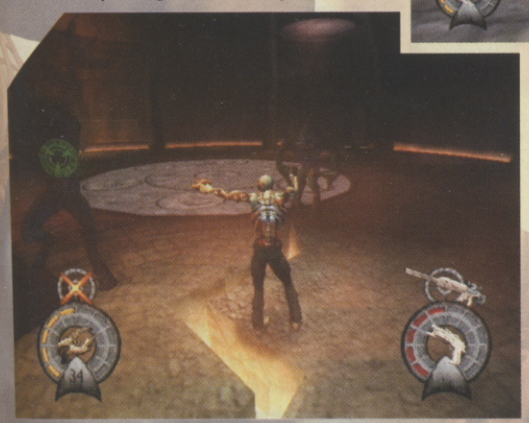
These guys are hard as nails

When you've got black magic *and* firearms, you can set fire to the bad guys then pump them full of lead

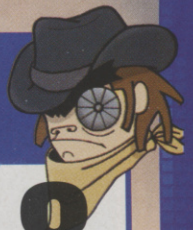


Nice jig, boney

Hit multiple targets with twin pistols



CVG RECKONS



Likely to frustrate as well as delight. But there's so much to see and do, most will stick with it to the gripping end. Lee

8

If you like this try this...
Shadow Man (DC, N64)

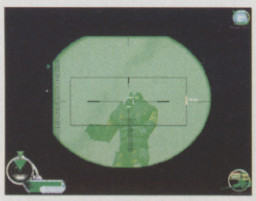
Command & Conquer Renegade

Sci-fi blasting, C&C style

Well that's one way to stop the enemy re-supply choppers

COST: **£34.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-16**
DEVELOPER: **WESTWOOD**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

This is the gaming equivalent of those nutty scientists messing about with human DNA. What they've done is take the DNA of a real-time strategy game and inject it into a first-person shooter. The result? That depends on how big a fan you were of the C&C games on PC – and on how much you'll overlook the mistakes that come close to turning an interesting concept into a very middle-of-the-road shooter.



Clear a path with the rifle

Blow up control pods to power down buildings

REMEDIAL RENEGADE

Up till now C&C meant commanding a massive army from rival factions GDI and NOD. You were the organ grinder and needed a strong strategic mind. In Renegade you're a single commando called Havoc, a humble GDI monkey dancing to someone else's tune on the battlefield, who doesn't have to think past whatever's in the sights of his gun.

Die-hard C&C heads will enjoy the novelty of running around a world they know so well in first-person, encountering units that you've previously only seen as tiny, impersonal pixels. And everyone will be pleased with the game's construction as it ensures you rarely get lost and there's always a solid action sequence just round the corner.

Apart from slogging it on foot, you get to ride in vehicles like the classic C&C Mammoth tanks. Plus there are sub-missions to complete, semi-hidden areas to uncover and enough skirmishes going on in the background to give a passable feeling of a war going on around you.

But the levels are linear, and you feel the game is holding your hand all the way. The AI is sometimes amazingly dumb, and the review code was worryingly buggy too.

But Renegade's biggest problem is that it's been so long in development – shooters have moved on now. The likes of Halo and MOH: Allied Assault have upped the ante, leaving Renegade looking and feeling weak in comparison. Its core gameplay just doesn't do anything new, and even its more impressive moments, such as the multiplay mode, have been done better elsewhere.

A TOUCH OF TACTICS

Multiplayer is a redeeming feature. Team-based, you play NOD or GDI, aiming to blow up the opposing base. You need different classes of troops to achieve this, buying them with the money you earn by killing and blowing up buildings.

This is where the tactics come in as you can use this cash to buy weapons, different characters, vehicles and the nuclear air-strike. But be warned, if you don't have a lot of players it's nowhere near as much fun.

Earn money by shooting people

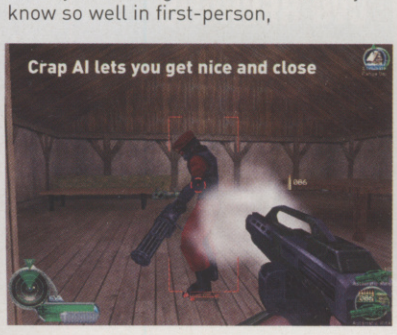
Then buy beefier characters, guns and vehicles

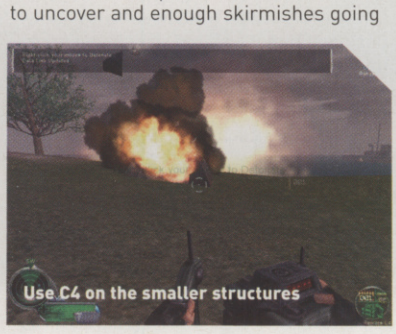
Use these to inflict damage on the enemy base

Then call in a nuke or an ion strike for serious damage

CVG FACT

One of the missions is an exact copy of the Commando solo mission from the original RTS game. Let's call it a (French accent please) 'homage'.



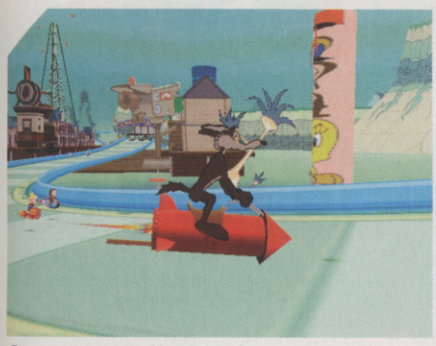


CVG RECKONS

Fun but flawed. Relies on its C&C name to pull in the fans, but it won't be attracting discerning shooter nuts. **Les**

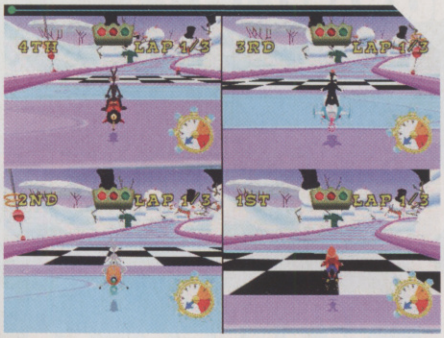
6

If you like this try these...
Medal Of Honour: Allied Assault (PC), Halo (Xbox)



The backgrounds are crammed to the eyeballs with action – oh, and Martians too!

Come in first to progress to the next level



Four-player games might be smooth but they're also on the wrong side of nondescript

Looney Tunes Space Race

Hang on a minute, aren't cartoons supposed to be funny?

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **INFOGRAMES**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**

Infogrames has killed comedy – or so it seems from playing Space Race. The game should have been a madcap race to the stars, with sneaky Acme tricks to play on rival racers for maximum laughs. While it has the ingredients, they're lost among annoying gameplay and weird handling.

Falling from the raised, twisty-turny tracks is all too easy, as is getting twatted by your own weapons. Avoiding other racers' attacks is also a nightmare and relies too much on luck rather than any real gameplaying skill.

But the biggest crime is the way you fall from first place to last every time you get hit or clip the trackside; you then have to struggle back into pole position when all you really want to do is slam the joypad through the screen with anger.

There are loads of different play modes and a four-way multiplayer in there, but that's certainly not enough to save Space Race from being painfully average and just too damned annoying.

CVG RECKONS

The lack of laughs and many frustrating moments totally spoil this. Lee

5

If you like this try this...
Wacky Races (DC, PS2)

Pull moves like interceptions to unlock extras

NHL 2002

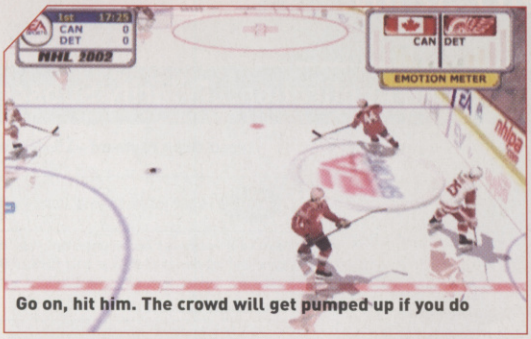
Xbox ice skater that should be in the sin bin

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **MARCH**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **EA**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

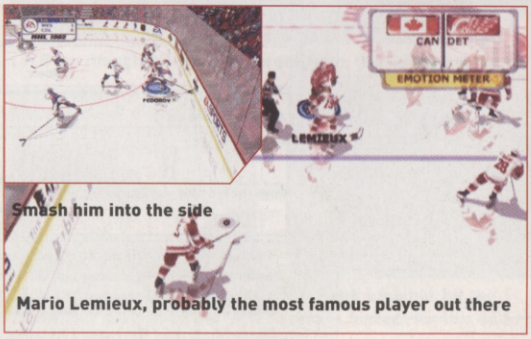
The first new feature EA is boasting about in the final Xbox version of NHL 2002 is... a new camera view. Um, kind of goes to show the level of innovation gamers can come to expect from the average ice hockey game.

When it comes down to it, NHL is very much a game for ice hockey fans only, rather than general sports fans who like to try their hands at everything. The problem lies in the manic speed of the game, and scoring often feels more like luck than judgement. It's just too easy to get dispossessed at any moment, regardless of how good you get at it.

Which is exactly why ice hockey fans will most likely freak for it. They'll love the way the carnage on the rink gets the crowd involved, which in turn makes the players even more hyped. It's ice hockey; what more can we say?



Go on, hit him. The crowd will get pumped up if you do



Smash him into the side

Mario Lemieux, probably the most famous player out there

However, for all of Xbox's extra power, it looks much like the PlayStation 2 and PC versions – despite the all-new 'Breakaway Cam', which didn't seem to do a whole lot new for us. Multiplayer does give it replay value though, as you'll have seen pretty much all the game has to offer after just a few runs in Career or Tournament mode. Call us cynics, but it looks like Xbox is next in line for the EA Sports production line.

CVG RECKONS

Lacks innovation and doesn't really push the machine. If you don't already know exactly what to expect, then this definitely isn't for you. Les

6

If you like this try these...
Pro Evolution Soccer, NHL 2002 (PS2)

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Got a PS2 this Christmas? Want to know what games to buy? PlayNation's got everything you need:

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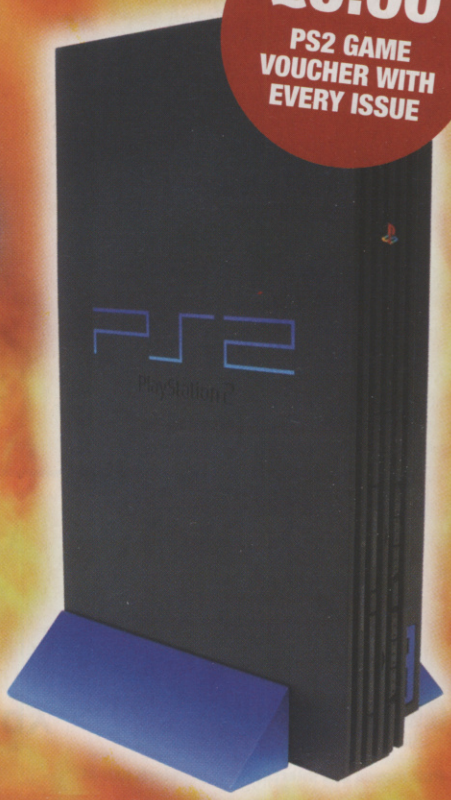

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P2004XCVB

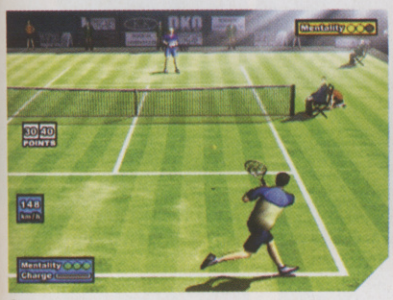
Centre Court: HardHitter

No-frills knockabout action, all at a nice knockdown price

COST: **£29.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **MAGICAL COMPANY**
PUBLISHER: **MIDAS**

If you enjoy the thrill of beating a furry yellow ball back and forth over a net in a glorified game of Pong, chances are you're a Virtua Tennis fan.

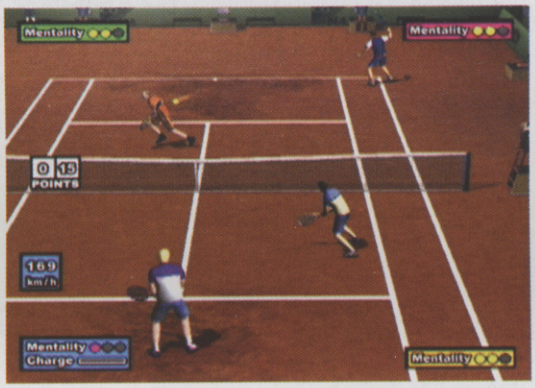
And from a distance you might think that HardHitter looks very similar to the legendary DC game, but when you get to experience the action on offer, you soon realise that HardHitter doesn't possess nearly the same visual clout, cool features, or soul of Sega's classic series. But costing ten quid less than most PS2 games, this could be nice little stopgap until VT2 appears later this spring.



This should hit him square in the plums...

A resemblance to... who?

You can play with girls too



Playing doubles with your mates is one of the best bits

As you'd expect, you're armed with all the necessary pro skills – lob, drop-shot, dive, smash, slice, and cross-court thump. But HardHitter also lets you adjust the power of every shot (using the 'charge meter'), enabling you to place the ball pretty much wherever you want.

However, most of the other features are very mediocre, like the 'mentality gauge', which seems to have absolutely no noticeable effect on the performance of players. And although the fast pace of the rallies keeps the in-game action lively and entertaining, the Arcade and Exhibition game modes are painfully uninspired and dull. But if the urge for some brainless ball-thumping is too irresistible to pass up, HardHitter should quell that hunger till Sega's classic smash-fest bounces onto PS2.

CVG RECKONS

Not in the same league as Virtua Tennis but, at £30, it should suffice until Sega delivers the goods on PS2. Mike

6

If you like this try this...
Virtua Tennis 2 (DC)

ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002

If you're expecting a leisurely ride, forget it!

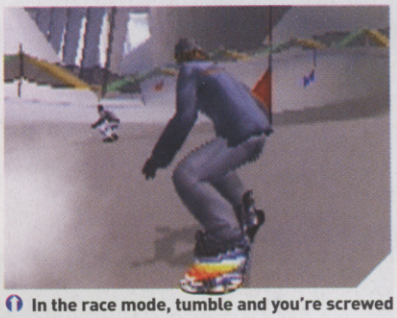
COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **FEBRUARY 22**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**

Your first few hours of playing Snowboarding 2002 will make you feel like you've got all the skills of a lobotomised chimp, because this is one tough bastard to get to grips with. But hang in there until your skills are up to scratch, and you'll get some rewarding gameplay for your trouble.

The X Games mode lets you compete against real-life pros in freestyle and race events such as Slope Style, Big Air, and Snowboarder X. But where Snowboarding 2002 really hooks you in is with its hardcore Snowboarder Mode – the aim being to progress your boarder from a small-time amateur to a world-class pro, similar to the action in Amped on Xbox.

Unlike the breakneck arcade antics of SSX Tricky or Shaun Palmer on PS2, Snowboarding 2002 offers you a cool sim experience, in which you carefully hone your skills by hitting training slopes to gain skill points, work on your physical abilities in the gym, enter competitions, and travel the globe as a boarding don.

And although the graphics and visual style are a bit soulless compared to EA's and Activision's extravagant extreme titles, the hardcore sim gameplay makes it a good alternative to the all-out arcade action of its rivals. Which comes as a relief after Konami's last ESPN boarding disaster on GBA.



In the race mode, tumble and you're screwed

Even though it's a snowboarding sim, the action's extreme

Hammering the halfpipe is difficult but a good bet

Peter Line has all the moves, except for this one

CVG RECKONS

This really is snowboarding at its toughest, but hardcore fans of the sport should relish the chilly challenge. Mike

7

If you like this try this...
Amped (Xbox)

Maximo: Ghosts

It's maximum action in this mercilessly manic monster mash

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **MARCH 1**
PLAYERS: **1**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**

He's not that bothered by you

Whip out your shield, quick

Give it the double-jump stab

Being a soldier sucks a fat one. You go to war, kick some ass for a few months, and then when it's over you traipse home battered and bruised, have a hot meal, grab some nookie with the missus, then head out for more war.

But imagine how Maximo must feel: he comes home from war expecting to get his leg over, but finds that the evil king Achille has kidnapped his beloved bride-to-be. Add to that the fact that this nasty old bloke has turned Maximo's beautiful homeland into a living, breathing hellhole populated by angry mobs of monsters, and you'll understand why our hero's pretty pissed off.

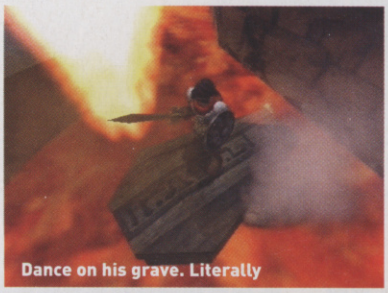
MONSTERS STINK

Your armour glints in the moonlight as you leap around a misty graveyard hacking through zombies, dicing up skeletons and making mincemeat out of ghouls. Boney hands claw at you from the grave, giant luminous skulls shoot towards you. Then there's an earthquake and massive sections of ground crumble away from beneath you to reveal large lakes of bubbling lava. To top it off you get twatted by a low-flying ghost, causing your armour to drop off, leaving you naked except for a pair of snug-fitting boxers.

You never feel safe, not for a second. If the ground isn't disappearing or deforming, nutty monsters are popping up all over the place, axes are flying at you, and all manner of nastiness is constantly hunting you down.

As you know, Ghosts To Glory is loosely based on the classic 2D platformer, Ghosts n' Goblins, a game legendary for being tougher than climbing Mount Everest in just a thong. Well, this reworked piece of mindless hack 'n' slash magic is just as hardcore as its distant cousin.

Spectres attack, but a slash of your sword should do the trick



Dance on his grave. Literally

Plenty of precision jumping action here

Chuck your shield at enemies

CVG FACT

The characters in Maximo were designed by Susumu Matsushita, the man behind the character art in one of Japan's most famous magazines Famitsu Weekly. Hmm, fascinating

IT'S NO PUSHOVER

Ghosts To Glory is quite a unique 3D platformer in the fact that it's very old skool: there aren't endless credits as in most games nowadays. This forces you to be alert at all times, as sloppy play will see you killed off in no time. This may do your head in if you aren't used to a ruthless challenge, but being faced with a rock hard adventure makes a refreshing change to the kid-gloves gameplay we've become accustomed to.

Admittedly, there is an argument that the only reason the developers made it so demanding is because there aren't that many stages in the game, but even so you'll get loads of play out of Ghosts To

MAXIMO AND CO.

Oi, you 'orrible lot, say 'cheese'. Left to right: Maximo, Achille, Lenore, a skeleton and a zombie.

***LIKES:** Getting it on with his woman after warring.*
***DISLIKES:** People who run off with his lady and turn nice kingdoms into hell.*

***LIKES:** Turning nice kingdoms into hell and kidnapping pretty ladies.*
***DISLIKES:** People with armour and boxer shorts.*

***LIKES:** Being a fit sorceress.*
***DISLIKES:** Wearing anything that isn't black... a bit like our Les, then.*

***LIKES:** The feeling of cold air on his bones.*
***DISLIKES:** Sell-out skellies who pop up in horror flicks just for a cheap buck.*

***LIKES:** Eating big chunks of cold bloody flesh.*
***DISLIKES:** Sunny holidays in the South of France and cooked food.*

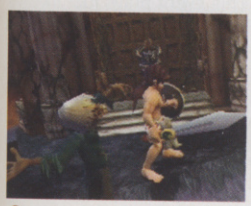
To Glory

A skeleton attacks you with his bony fists

Gus creates a mini earthquake with his spade

Your basic hack 'n' slash moves are vital

Boss pirate traps you in ice

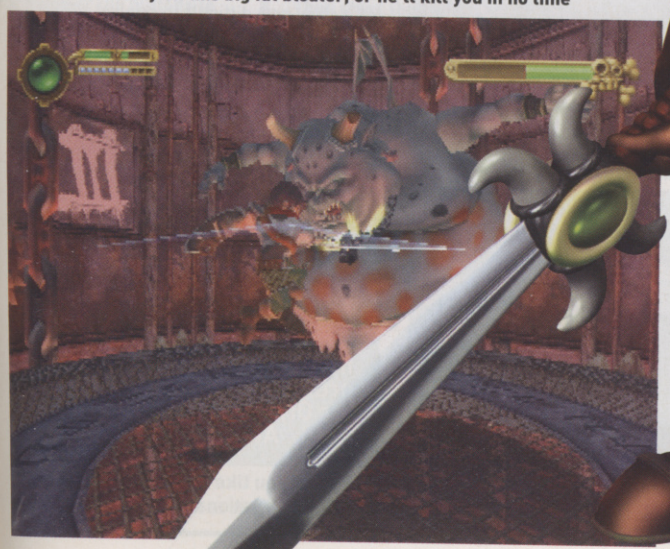


It's behind you!

Glory. Before you start this game you'll be soft as a lump of cookie dough, but if you crack right through to the end, you'll come out the other side a hardened block of stone.

But as well as being hard as nails, the cool shape-shifting environments in Capcom's latest offering are as deadly and perilous as coming face to face with a horde of skellies; you'll have to hack through giant walls of razor-sharp thorns, negotiate crumbling cliffs, and avoid giant red-hot lava eruptions and scalding jets of steam. Blink and you're toast.

Show no mercy on this big fat bloater, or he'll kill you in no time



STAYIN' ALIVE, STAYIN' ALIVE!

As you bounce around the mad landscapes and battle it out with the undead, you'll find that your mind is constantly focused on one crucial concept: staying alive and hunting for power-ups to keep you that way.

This is because life is so fragile. One miss-timed sword slash can result in your blade getting wedged in a nearby object, which gives enemies just enough time to lay into you and strip you of your clothes.

You leap around like a maniac, busting heads left, right and centre...

Then whack! You get your blade stuck in a gnarled tree. Arse!

This gives a skellie just enough time to remove your armour

YOU GOT THE POWER!

Every level is packed with power-up potential. Unlock the right treasure chest, kill a certain beast, and find secret areas and you'll be rewarded with a flaming sword, special attacks, magic, mint gold armour, and tons of other awesome abilities. On your quest to restore the land back to rights and rescue your bird you'll notch up loads of these handy power-ups, which really come in useful when you're faced with the likes of giant fire-breathing demons and massive trolls, or when you're simply stuck in a tight spot and seriously outnumbered.

Ghosts To Glory will have you tearing your hair out at times because it's so tough and unforgiving, but the fantastic atmosphere and frantic action make you want to see it through to the end. A sadistic treat.

CVG RECKONS

'Vanilla' gamers steer clear, because this is a challenge only for people with grit and hardcore determination flowing through their veins. **Mike**

8

If you like this try these...
Jak And Daxter (PS2), Klonoa 2 (PS2)

ESPN International Winter Games

Any game that makes curling seem appealing has got to be good

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**

It doesn't take long to realise ESPN Winter Games is considerably better than official Olympics stinker Salt Lake 2002. There are more events and more variety, both in the sports served up and the way they're played. It looks more impressive too, really capturing the feeling of rocketing down a mountain on a couple of flimsy sticks.

Even when speed isn't important, ESPN is better. Look at curling. To watch, it appears slow and simple, but there's actually a lot to it, playing almost like a game of snooker on ice. Safety shots protect high-scoring stones and hard-hitters knock your opponents' shots out of the scoring area.

GOLD WINNER

ESPN's events are a lot of fun and play very differently – even events that are pretty much the same. For instance, the only difference between the two ski jumps is their length, but they're in a different world to play. One is more skill based, flicking the analog sticks to get a good take off, then timing your landing to perfection. The other requires lots of hammering of the joypad to gain speed and as much lift as possible.

Bobsleigh, speed skating and downhill are all fast, simple and enjoyable, but things get slightly more complicated for figure skating. This event plays just like Dance Dance Revolution on ice, tapping the right button in time to the music to pull off dazzling jumps and pirouettes.

The snowboarding halfpipe is even more complicated, with lightning reflexes and tricky button combos needed to execute cool stunts. That leaves moguls and slalom. The first is pretty cool, skiing down a bump-riddled slope, pulling off tricks halfway down. The slalom, however, turns out to be the only duff event of the lot – slow and difficult to control.

As a one-player, ESPN is good, with hidden costumes (you've got to see the skiing bear) to unlock. It's the multiplayer that really is a blast, though – classic Olympic action for four players, that any fan of Track & Field will enjoy.

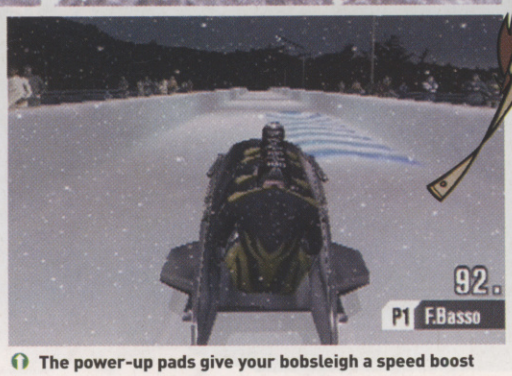
Tap in combos for cool stunts on the snowboard halfpipe

Hammer the buttons in speed skating

CVG FACT

If you were wondering, ESPN stands for Entertainment and Sports Programming Network. So, nothing cool then.

Build rhythm to jump further in this ski jump, one of two



The power-up pads give your bobsleigh a speed boost

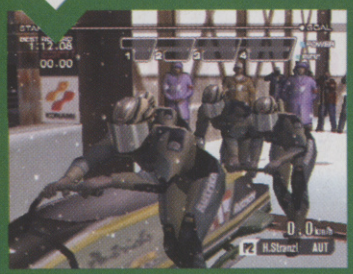
VARIETY SHOW

You won't be nabbing a Gold in every event if the only sport you're any good at is skiing, because ESPN Winter Games is packed with variety. After all, Olympic success only comes after putting in a lot of practice. Reckon you can still do it?

1 The tactics of curling

2 Dancing Stage on ice?

3 Speed in Alpine Downhill



The bobsleigh's like Wipeout in the snow

CVG RECKONS

Plenty of variety and solid events make this CVG's preferred choice for Olympic Gold. **Alex**

7

If you like this try these...
ESPN International Track & Field (PS2)

GIMME THAT GOLD

Fancy trying your hand at some chilly Olympic pursuits? Got a couple hours to spare? Then have a go at Salt Lake 2002 and you could be a multi-winning Gold medallist. Only problem is you need the patience of a saint to stick with it for any longer than a few minutes...

Pulling off a trick worthy of Gold is the hardest part, but not that *hard*

Then it's just a case of waiting for the judges' scores to come in...

.....Before collecting first prize. All this in less than an hour

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **ATD**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**

Olympic sports games used to be fun. Pummelling a joypad to within an inch of its life on the 100-metre sprint may not push any boundaries in terms of innovative gameplay, but it made for a brilliant four-player blast. And while the multiplayer aspect of classic Olympics games remains in Salt Lake 2002, the fun and excitement have gone altogether.

The main problem is its lack of events. With only six, it takes less than an hour to check out everything there is on offer. Worse still, you can get Gold in each one in less time than it takes to get the damn thing back from the shops.

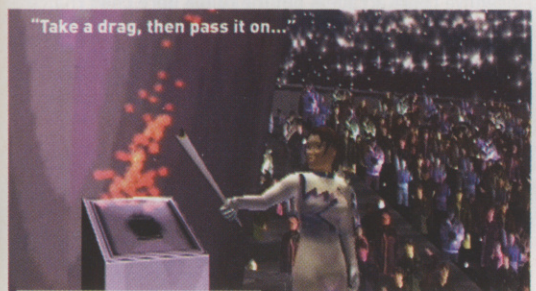
Angle the skis and jump

The Aerials – cool but easy

The downhill is fast and looks good, but there's not much to it

Salt Lake 2002

Six of the best? Half-a-dozen from hell, more like...



Hammer the buttons to build up speed...

...Then steer the sleigh down the run. Yawn

Let the other guy win at snowboarding – it's less painful

IT'S DOWNHILL FROM HERE

Men's Downhill is the most exciting, but don't expect your heart to shift out of first gear. Bomb down a mountain, crouching to gain speed, turning tightly to sneak through every gate. Miss one and you're disqualified, a right pain in the arse if you make it to the bottom and narrowly skid wide of the last pole.

The slalom is just as unforgiving. The skier's controls are oversensitive, so your little guy will be violently zigzagging down the course rather than gliding smoothly. There's no feeling of speed either, something that is just as glaringly obvious in the snowboard slalom too. Here you creep down the slope, never quite reaching crawling speed even when you're 'pelting' along in full flow. There are no stunts to perform or objects to grind, just the controls to struggle with and the ongoing desire to turn the bloody thing off.

Ski Jump is painfully simple, timing your launch and then angling the skis in mid-air for maximum lift. Bobsleigh is just as limited, to the point where we got over halfway down the run without even steering. Sure, you won't get a Gold medal this way but there just isn't any challenge to sink your teeth into, and that becomes all too clear when competing against mates in multiplayer.

That leaves Aerials, the only event to try something different. First choose a trick, then tap in the button combo to execute the move. It looks cool but, like the game as a whole, it's just too easy. It's this lack of challenge, combined with the limited number of events and its awkward control system, that makes Salt Lake 2002 a waste of both your time and your money. Avoid.

Steering in slalom is a pain in the arse

CVG RECKONS

We'd rather eat yellow snow than spend time playing this stinker. Alex

4

If you like this try this...
The game opposite! (PS2)

Parappa The Rapper 2

Is it Snoop Dogg or doggy-doo?

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **NANAON-SHA**
PUBLISHER: **SONY**

Could anything be cooler than a rapping dog who learned kung-fu from an onion freestyling with an ant in the living room, after being zapped to bug-size by a malfunctioning TV remote? What if he was drawn in cardboard cut-out style graphics? It's from Japan as well, so CVG's got to love it, right?

The gaming world's favourite hip-hop hound is back, doing pretty much exactly what he did on PSone. Cartoon animals rap Japlish lyrics that – intentionally or not – feature hilarious rhymes and stacks of innuendo. The aim is to stop a mad professor from changing everything into noodles, ensuring the dog can eat burgers once again. You do this by pressing buttons on the pad in time to music.

JABBA THE MUTT

Parappa 2 looks cool enough and it's entertaining the first time you play through, but is tapping X along to some music really what you bought a PS2 for? If all you want is quirky charm and a game to impress girls, then Parappa 2 is fine, but next to the likes of Devil May Cry and Grand Theft Auto III the whole rhythm action concept is a bit of a joke.

There are only eight stages, the two-player Freestyle mode is an annoying disappointment, and there's no incentive to replay the game except to hear the tunes again. But we're guessing you put CDs on when your sole desire is to hear music.

Yes, it's cool to see Parappa growing and shrinking as he rhymes with an ant and doing an army bootcamp on a BMX, but it's all too shallow to be worth forty quid. The bonus game is cool – you get to chop tiles held by Master Onion's students like those 'hit the mole' games in the arcade – but the tunes here can't match up to the awesome 'kick, punch, it's all in the mind' from the PSone game.

We know the appeal lies in the quirkiness of it all. But we're not about to big up a short game with naff-all gameplay just cos we're supposed to.

Tap buttons to rap and cut hair

They grow as they rap

Parappa recalls he was mistaken for a urinal last night

PS2 graphics aren't as good as Sony said they'd be

CVG FACT

Characters from Um Jammer Lammy (also by NanaOn-Sha) crop up in Parappa 2. No sign of the ultra cool Vib Ribbon though.

HIT BUTTONS, BARK WORDS

Parappa The Rapper 2 isn't the most complicated game ever made, to say the least. If you can hit X then Square on a pad without having to look down at it, you're game-on. The rhythms you have to copy get harder as things progress, and every mess-up takes you a step closer to Noodlegeddon.

Just copy what the ghost does. Easy

Every missed beat drops your rating

Two-player is a matter of who cocks up first

That's a lot of food for such thin people

CVG RECKONS

The cool canine can still spit a funny rhyme, but gameplay is as shallow as ever. **Dean**

6

If you like this try these...
Space Channel 5 (DC)

End the game with a mental block-party

Test Drive Off-Road Wide Open

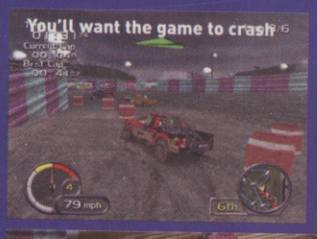
Pity they didn't test drive this better

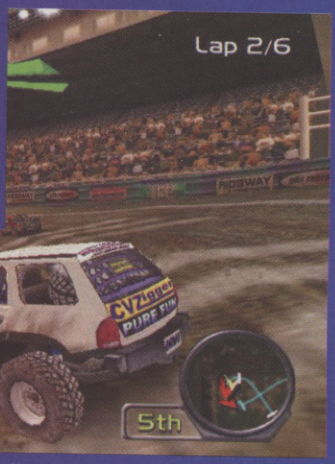
COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **ANGEL STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**

For the first few hours you almost get fooled into thinking that maybe, just maybe, the developers did a little more than simply port the game and throw in an extra stage which was probably intended for the PS2 version but missed the deadline.

The arrow points the way

Rain worsens the poor handling





Fancy changing one of those tyres if you get a puncture?

But then you start to notice. The PS2's draw distance nightmare is here. So is the lack of variety in the courses and the scenery. Add in the road-rage oriented AI drivers and pathetic sound effects that have to be heard to be believed, and you realise the full extent of the horror. It's only the addition of the carnage filled Stadium course that saves this from being a total wipeout. The whole thing just leaves you wondering if that big black box by your TV really has any extra power at all.

4

Jeremy McGrath Supercross World

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **ACCLAIM**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**

PS2 has become a veritable breeding ground for Motocross games. THQ was first with the mediocre MX2002, Infogrames brought us the mildly better MX Rider. And now, in last place, comes this paltry effort from Acclaim.

Although JMSW is reasonably fast and boasts bikes with fluid handling, the racing lacks intensity, and the Freestyle mode is appalling. Even though it possesses cross-country races and arena courses, the environments are lifeless and the AI riders only possess basic driving skills. As for the stunt element – well, don't waste your time because it's un-extreme, unintuitive and unrewarding.

4

This whole game needs a bit of a forklift

Peter Pan: The Legend Of Never Land

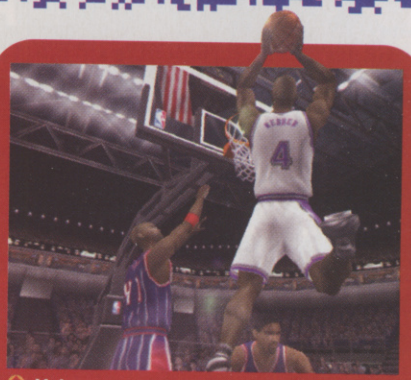
COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
DEVELOPER: **DISNEY**
PUBLISHER: **SONY**

"That's for the crap Robin Williams movie"

Game for kids. Words that would strike fear into the heart of anyone looking for a half-decent game that the developers had taken their time over, rather than one that's just been rushed out the door because kids don't know what good gameplay is. Wrong.

Kids are no fools, and Disney knows it. Peter Pan is a linear platform hack-and-slash, but it actually manages to be fun with it. The music and voice acting add to the overall feel that you are playing in a cartoon. It's not the toughest of challenges, but it *is* fun.

6



Make sure you don't miss because getting the rebound is a real pain

NBA Live 2002

COST: **£39.99**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
DEVELOPER: **EA**
PUBLISHER: **EA**

You can port a game from one platform to another and get away with it if the original game was good and you convert it well. The original NBA was good on PS2, but this is a hopeless port.

With little noticeable difference between the graphics here and on PS2, it comes down to the gameplay, which is spoiled by controls that don't feel intuitive and make supposedly easy stuff such as rebounds and facing up to opponents just too difficult. It's poorly thought out and though gameplay is as fast and frantic as you would expect from a basketball sim, we're left cold by such a no-brainer of a conversion from EA Sports.

5

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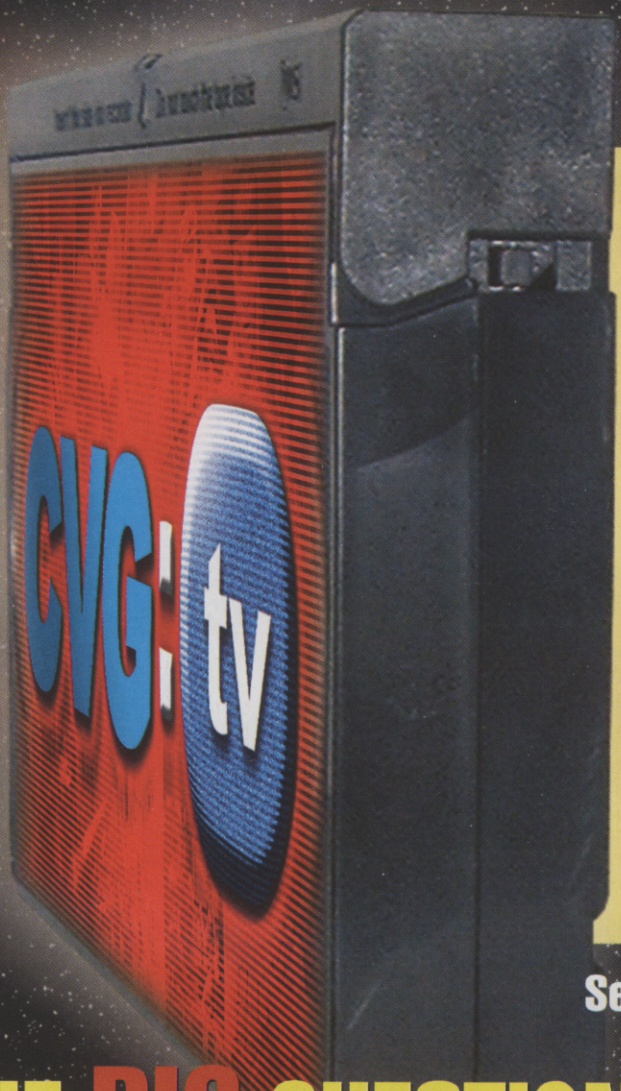

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HANDHEL

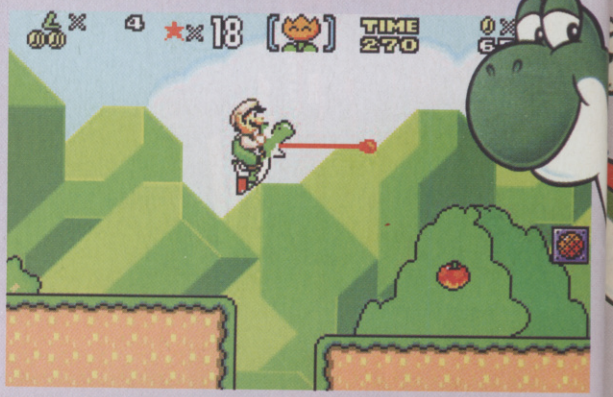
CVG'S INDISPENSABLE GUIDE TO THE BEST WAYS TO KEEP YOUR

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2

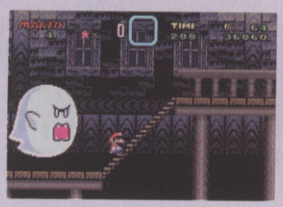
COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
OUT: **TBC**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**

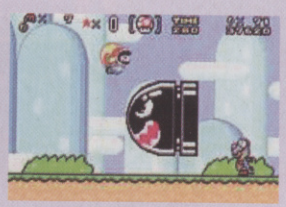
The hero: a pipe-fixing pot-bellied Italian fella, sporting gloves stolen from Mickey Mouse's wardrobe, a pair of shrink-wrap dungarees and a mammoth moustache that would make any European porn star jealous.

But who cares if Mario looks like a reject from a DIY fetish club? Fact is, the little guy has been the star of the two greatest platform games ever, Super Mario 64 and Super Mario World on the SNES. The latter may be 12 years old, but stand SMW next to any 2D platformer and the plumber always comes out on top. And now all that timeless magic has been carefully stuffed into a tiny GBA cart. So if you didn't catch it first time round and fancy a dose of precision-jumping paradise, buy it. Even if you caned it to death on SNES, buy it, because a GBA without a copy of Super Mario Advance 2 is like... Sod it, it rocks and that's that.



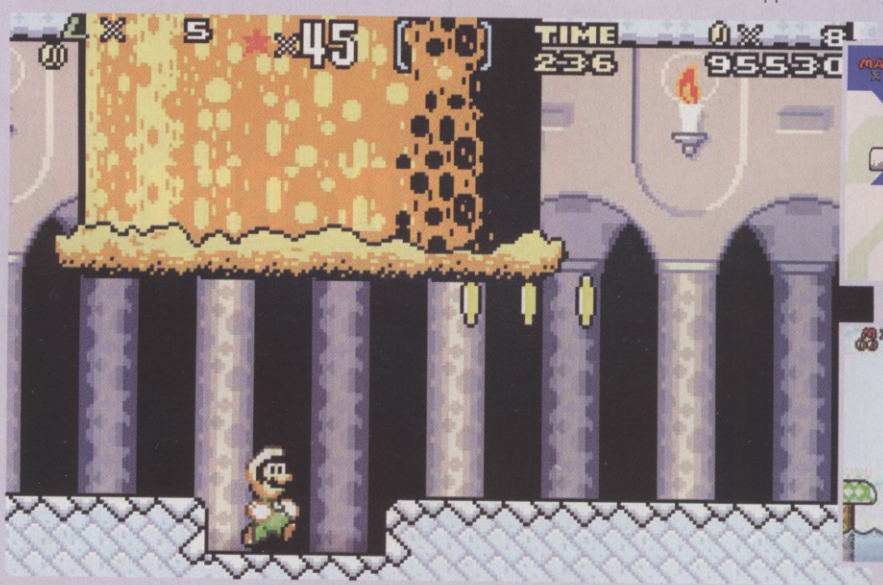
Yoshi's oral skills make him very popular with the ladies


Luigi's ghost sucker-upper would be handy right about now


Mario pulls up sharply to avoid prematurely biting the bullet

HAPPY HAIRY HERO

You dodge giant grimacing bullets, surf lava pools on a raft of skulls, soar through happy cloud-filled skies like a fat hairy superman in search of secret sub-levels and 'exits', ride a cute dinosaur with an appetite for anything that moves, and venture



Watch your back – these giant wooden posts are liable to try to squish you flat

Mario rides his trusty steed

Yoshi tries to grab a quick snack while leaping between dolphins

LDS

HANDS BUSY

Rated! The definitive handheld RPG explodes onto GBA and is guaranteed to take over your life

Check our special preview of the classic point-and-click adventure starring a man called George

through tons of brilliantly themed levels packed with wonderfully weird and familiar creatures.

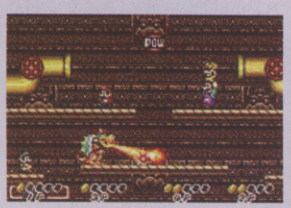
The universe of SMW is one of the most vibrant, charming and quirkily fantastic ever to grace videogame-land, but the unique visual style of the characters and the environments aren't what makes SMW the don. Unlike most of the 2D platforming toss that's been churned out over the past decade, this gaming marvel boasts the finest level design – every gap, moving platform and piece of landscape is perfectly measured to test and frustrate you, and makes sure that by the time you complete all 96 stages you'll be a Class A platform game guru, able to leap with your eyes shut like some sort of jumpin' Jedi god.

YIKES, HE CAN TALK!

There have been a few alterations made to the GBA version, like the inclusion of speech. Now when Mario gets a power-up he screams, "Oo hoo! Jus' what I needed!" or "Lucky!" But when you're little Mario and desperately need a mushroom to grow and avoid death, we think when he nabs a power-up he should say something like, "Thank *?*@! Thought I was gonna cark it!"

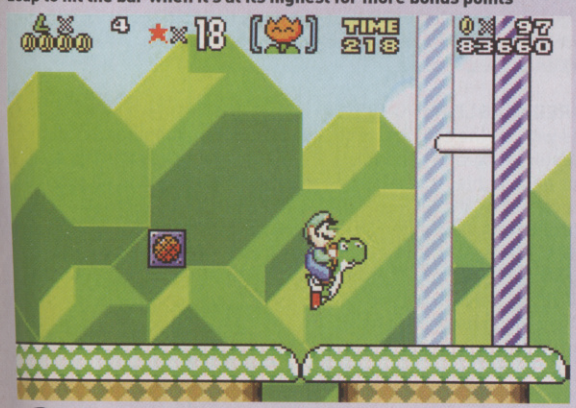
Nevertheless, the speech is a nice touch. Another small addition is the facility to play as Luigi, who's equipped with a super floaty jump. But playing as Luigi feels like a bit of a cheat, as all of the levels are designed specifically for Mario's leaping abilities. Plus now you can save anywhere, which makes the game a tad easier and might annoy some hardcore fans.

Hijack the orange dude's cloud

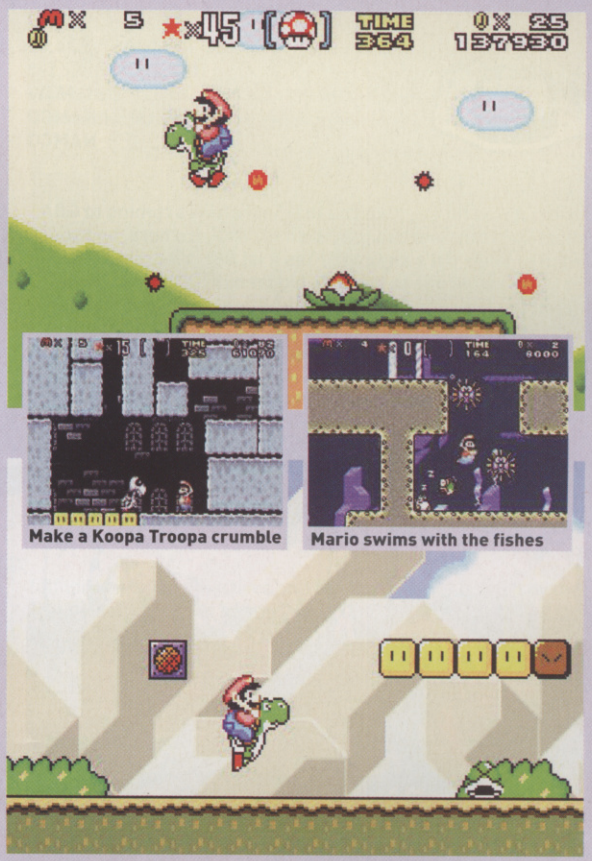


Bowser grills some Italian ass

Leap to hit the bar when it's at its highest for more bonus points



This flower spurts out projectiles that sting like buggery... we assume



Make a Koopa Troopa crumble

Mario swims with the fishes

Head-butt the blue and orange block for some helpful info

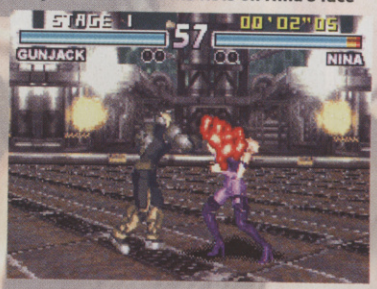
STILL THE DADDY

One of the major criticisms of SMA2 is the fact that neither SMW nor the additional Mario Bros multiplayer game is original. And with the truckload of reworked retro titles that have been flooding onto GBA, like Gradius, ISS, and all the greatest hits packages, surely we have to recognise simply re-releasing a classic SNES game on GBA is lazy. It's this that brings Mario down to a nine instead of a ten. But don't get us wrong, SMW is a near flawless game, and has hardly aged in terms of playability and boasts more levels and action than you can shake a mouldy mushroom at. It may be old but SMA2 will fill your handheld world with utter joy.

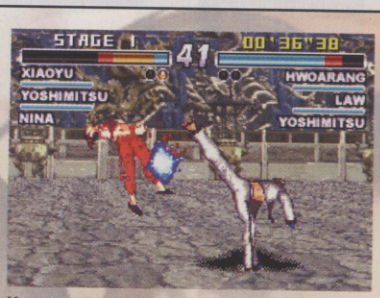
9

Import game supplied by Computer Exchange (Tel: 01923 228 828)

Crunch! Hwoarang makes a strike with classic textbook technique



Gunjack unleashes his fists on Nina's face

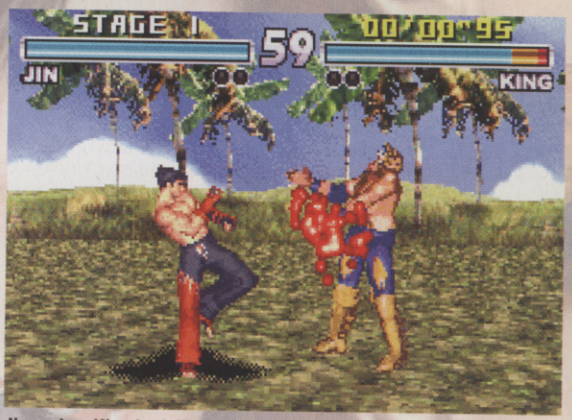


Hwoarang does his surprisingly realistic Mr Elastic impression

TEKKEN ADVANCE

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO**

When it was first announced that Tekken was coming to GBA, most fight fans were mighty excited. Well, it's here, and you want to know if it's any good? Yes it is! But is it great? CVG hates to be the one to burst its big fat bubble, but no. We'll admit the fisticuffs action is hard-hitting, slick, and on a par with Super Street Fighter II on GBA, but if you anticipated something monumental, prepare to be highly disappointed.



Jin makes King look like a pussy – but don't tell him to his face

Back to basics. A straight thump in the chops gets the KO

He may look like an oaf, but King's moves pack some punch

Floats like a butterfly, stings like a bitch. Ouch

Xiaoyu introduces her foot to Hwoarang's jaw. Very sociable

UNLEASH SOME WHUPASS

Yoshimitsu goes bananas and starts spinning like a madman, slashing at you with his meaty blade, but you block and counter by grabbing the bony-faced freak and pulverise him in a flurry of ruthless attacks. As you're beating the crap out of him the camera zooms to home in on the hardcore action.

See, Namco has tried to recreate the slick and dramatic visual style of the Tekken games that appeared on PSone and PS2, with sweeping camera moves and mock 3D visuals – the characters and backdrops are animated in 2D, while the arena floor rotates in 3D. But although the fighters look great, the environments possess all the charisma and style of an empty warehouse.

PREDICTABLE PUNCHES

As with all the Tekken games, you can string together blistering combos and there are masses of moves to master for each fighter, but where this game falls short is in its lack of gameplay innovation and play modes. Arcade, Survival, Time Attack, and three On three modes are available, but considering all of these have appeared before in other Tekken games, you can't help but feel that the GBA version should have been treated to something extra. The brawling action is fast, fluid and tough, but it's unlikely to knock you out, unless you're a mental midget who lives in a cupboard and are dazzled by paperclips and the amazing transparency of tracing paper.

7

Import game supplied by Computer Exchange (Tel: 01923 228 828)

ARMY MEN: OPERATION GREEN

The beach assault from Medal Of Honour? Er no, but it's almost as good

Look at the pretty textures as you take a slug in the chest

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1**
OUT: **FEBRUARY 22**
DEVELOPER: **POCKET STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **3DO**

Any new Army Men game comes loaded with the threat of being shite. Blissfully unaware that its games brand stinks worse than fresh dog eggs, 3DO has decided to give another games developer a crack at making a good Army Men game. The plan nearly worked too, as Operation Green doesn't offer quite as much green-tinged mediocrity as the other games.

MAYBE NEXT TIME...
This time the action takes the form of a top-down shoot 'em up. You have to wage a one-man war against the Tan Army,

Shoot those barrels and you'll trigger a huge explosion

Use the convoy for cover, but try not to get squished

Root for the green guys in this tank-on-tank scene

fulfilling mission objectives and trying not to get melted by the Tan flak cannons. It's better than you might expect but there are still problems. Controlling your hero feels sluggish and precise aiming with your machine-guns is impossible. The action's pretty slow moving but at least there's a lot happening on screen to keep you busy. It's just a shame boredom sets in a bit too soon.

6

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO**

MR DRILLER 2

Drill it to the left, shake it to the right. This is fun!

You need to collect air capsules while you drill

Freefall to the goal

Death of a Driller – heartbreaking

Go Driller, go! The only game series where you use a pneumatic drill to clear the screen of multicoloured blocks explodes onto GBA with new features such as the multiplayer games to tickle your drill-bit.

What starts off as random downward drilling turns into strategic precision excavation at breakneck speed. This hidden depth is what makes the Driller games some of the finest puzzlers seen in recent years and the best yet on GBA.

8

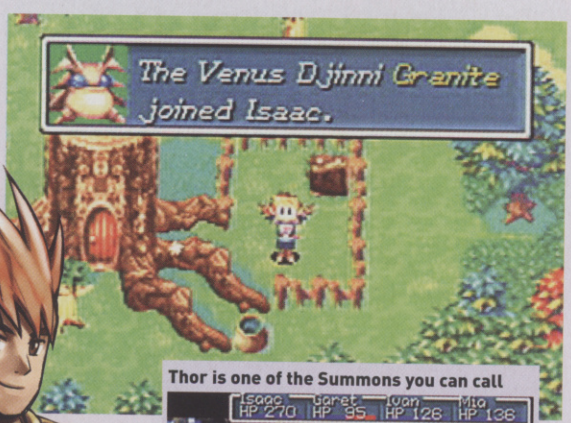
GOLDEN SUN

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
OUT: **FEBRUARY 22**
DEVELOPER: **CAMELOT/NINTENDO**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**

The keys to your first car, £1000 in real money, your first caress of breast-flesh... all wonderful things to have in your hands. But still not quite as wonderful as Golden Sun. It's the first original RPG to grace Game Boy Advance and one of the most intricately designed and monumental Japanese RPGs you're ever likely to play. Cherish it.

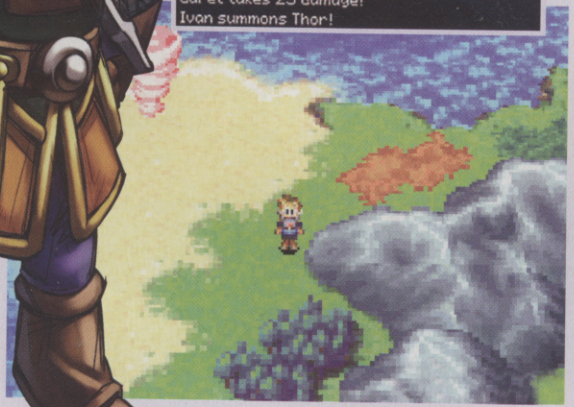
NO SPOILERS HERE

A large part of Golden Sun's magic lies in the way the plot becomes the driving force to keep you adventuring. You play Isaac, a young alchemist who sets off to solve a small mystery that evolves majestically as you play, becoming one of the most gripping and emotional fantasy sagas ever. The incredible visuals and soul-stirring soundtrack (you MUST use headphones while playing!) also help totally immerse you in the wonder unfolding between your fingers.



The Djinni are aligned to fire, earth, water or wind

Thor is one of the Summons you can call



The world map makes use of GBA's sprite-scaling

Import game supplied by Computer Exchange (Tel: 01923 228 828)

The text window keeps you updated in battle

Chests lurk everywhere

The quest is truly enormous

LAMB KEBAB

Every RPG convention there ever was has been tweaked and honed so that even if the action and structure aren't original, it's all been made with such skill that playing feels as fresh as a newborn lamb. Minus the placenta goop, obviously. The turn-based battles feature magic animations that would look at home on PSone and the way the fight arenas swirl around your fighters is genius.

There's even Pokemon-style creature-raising in there too with the way you have to configure your elemental Djinni to improve your chances in battle. And you can battle friends via a link cable.

We can't stress enough how extraordinary Golden Sun is. It's deep enough for the RPG veteran while still accessible and appealing to the newbie. Buy it and realise how empty your life was before. Unmissable.

Best graphics on GBA? No problem

Mingle with the slaves on the boat

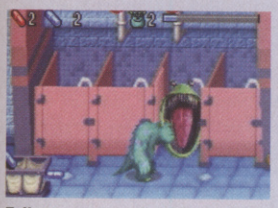
MONSTERS, INC.

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **NATSUME**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**

Zip yourself into your furry blue monster suit and help get Boo back home once more. It's the game inspired by the smash movie and it captures the feel of the film perfectly. Gameplay is simple enough for younger players, and the game has sufficient charm for adults too. Explore giant houses, streets and chilly mountains, seeking out the items needed to complete each section, and move on to the next.

CHILDREN (NOT) WELCOME

Your monster heroes have an impressive number of moves, and the level maps are randomly generated, making for slightly different level structures every time. You can roar at the Child Detection Agency goons and even stun them with special moves. Monsters, Inc. is much better than most Disney tie-in games and despite its simple and sometimes repetitive gameplay, remains enjoyable thanks to the authentic touches.



Toilet terror – mind his teeth

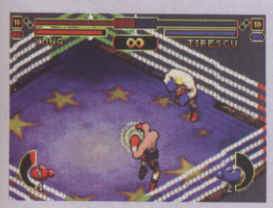
There are items galore all over

You get a handy map for self-location

Doors connect the segments

7

© Disney/Pixar



Power punches land damage but make you vulnerable

Rings change depending on where you fight – this is Vegas

MIKE TYSON BOXING

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
OUT: **MARCH 1**
DEVELOPER: **VIRTUACRAFT**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**

Boxing is nasty but we still sit glued to the TV for some top claret-on-canvas action whenever it's on. This GBA game doesn't have blood, but it does feature Tyson the Terrible leering at you on the title screen.

It's not quite the ultimate boxing game, but loads of play modes, including a remarkable career mode with full training schedules and management options, are sure to please both boxing fans and fighting game freaks.

7

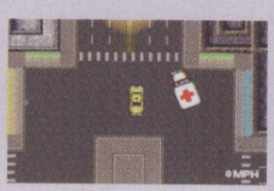
COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **REBELLION**
PUBLISHER: **DIGITAL WORLDWIDE**

MIDNIGHT CLUB STREET RACING

Yes, it's racing at night but why does it have to be so damned dark? Still, the gloomy visuals aren't the worst of the game's flaws: frustrating car chases, confused game structure and rival racer AI that leaves them all following the same racing line kill this dead on the starting grid.

You notch up new cars as you win races and challenges but with no battery back-up, saving your progress is hell – the passwords are a nasty jumble of letters that are hard to remember. And with no link-up multiplayer games this is one of the laziest of GBA games.

3



We had high hopes for this...

...but they've been dashed. Grr

CRUIS'N VELOCITY

GBA – 3D will get better

Race through Vegas, Mars...

Textures are definitely rough but speed is adequate enough

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1-4**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **GRAPHIC STATE**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**

It's the first proper 3D racer on GBA, and we don't mean fake Mario Kart-style 3D either. You can drive anywhere you want in Cruis'n Velocity but, sadly, this freedom is at the expense of smooth racing and decent graphics.

The cars handle okay, it packs a big challenge and it's moderate fun. The big 'but' is that, after some exciting Advance forays into 3D shooters, this looks nasty in comparison, struggling to handle textures at speed. 3D racing is possible on GBA – just not quite yet.

5

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **LUCASARTS**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**

Environments look sweet

What horrific droids lurk here?

STAR WARS: JEDI POWER BATTLES

Continue your Jedi training on GBA with this brainless but enjoyable hack and slash adventure. Choose from Episode I goons Obi-Wan, Qui-Gon Jinn or Mace Windu and explore the isometric levels, twatting droids as they approach. And the soundtrack's impressive too.

It's shallow, but the Star Wars licence definitely adds appeal. It's just a shame that the jumping sections are so frustrating – this would have scored higher if the hit-and-miss pixel-perfect leaping had been sorted.

6

SWJPB was whiffy on PSone...

...Luckily it works better on GBA

COST: **£34.99**
PLAYERS: **1-2**
OUT: **NOW**
DEVELOPER: **VIRTUCRAFT**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**

MORTAL KOMBAT ADVANCE

Oh Lord. Mortal Kombat shambles onto GBA with an embarrassed cough and sheepish expression that says: "I've just stung you for £35, sorry!" The MK games have mostly been a bit iffy and, true to form, this GBA outing is perfectly terrible.

It looks fine and would play okay if not for the fatal programming flaw that lets you get to the boss on each of the game's four skill levels by executing the same projectile move over and over. Hell, we didn't even take any damage until the final boss. This is stupid and pointless.

Just what is Motaru, anyway?

There's lots of posturing

You'd better bury her in a Y-shaped coffin...

2

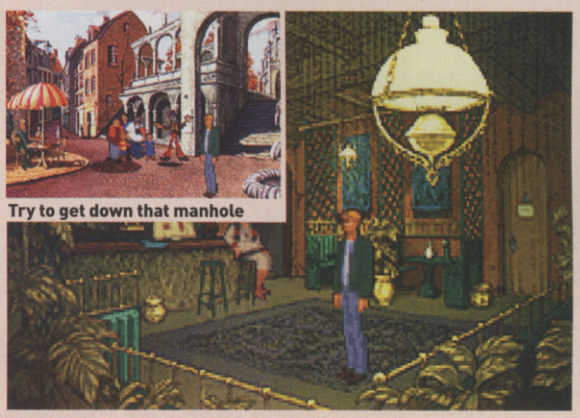
BROKEN SWORD: THE SHADOW OF THE TEMPLARS

PLAYERS: **1**
OUT: **MARCH/APRIL**
DEVELOPER: **REVOLUTION**
PUBLISHER: **BAM!**

Long before the X-Files made us all speculate whether we're descended from alien algae, there was another tale of conspiracy that had its viewers well and truly hooked. Broken Sword, the hit point-and-click PC and PSone adventure, is an epic tale of a regular guy called George caught up in a nightmare that spans the globe.

You collect items, interrogate locals and piece together the unfolding mystery in what's regarded by many as one of the greatest adventure games ever made. After a few years in storage, and with a lick or two of paint, this Broken Sword is ready to slash its way back into your life.

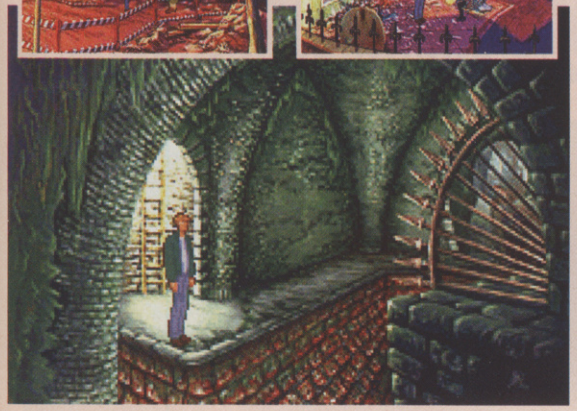
Try to get down that manhole



Don't ask the wrong questions at this exclusive club

It comes complete with two comedy gendarme officers

Humour has definitely helped make BS games so popular



Tracking suspects into the sewers of Paris is a dirty job

WORDS OF WORTH

Obviously GBA couldn't cope with all the voice-acting in the original and as a result, some of the dialogue has been cut back. Yet Broken Sword is still one of the wordiest adventures you'll play. And, just like Shadow of Memories on PS2, there's no combat in the game at all. So it's to the credit of the script and the incredible logic puzzles that the game remains 100 per cent engrossing the whole time.

The biggest difference between this and the PC version is that you control George himself rather than an arrow cursor, and you can now use a shoulder button to cycle through all objects and things of importance on any screen. So there's no more pointless searching of the screen for hidden clues.

Converting Broken Sword to GBA was a brave step, but the game is shaping up better than any of us could have possibly hoped. We can't wait for a review version.

CVG RECKONS

The few changes to the formula should make the game even more playable. It may be unusual, but we're already confident that Broken Sword will be one of the finest handheld adventures of 2002.

WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK!

Broken Sword is packed with neat animated sequences. Here's what happens in the opening moments of the adventure.

1. Tourist George Stobbart is in a Parisian cafe...
2. ...when he notices a tall man with a briefcase
3. Suddenly a clown is right up in George's face
4. He enters the cafe and switches the briefcase...
5. ...for his accordion. Hmmm
6. The clown runs off, his comedy pants swinging
7. For a moment all is peaceful, until...
8. Boom! The accordion was a bomb! The cafe's gone
9. George is left struggling beneath a parasol

So your great videogame adventure begins!

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Xbox anyone? CVG has got two consoles and 30 Xbox games to give away, so come get some before we change our minds

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Spring may be lurking round the corner, but as far as we're concerned, it's still dark, cold and nasty out there – so how best to beat the late winter blues? By getting your mitts on a brand new Xbox, of course! (Any excuse...) Landing one of these mean machines has to be your number one priority in 2002. Well, you'll be pleased to hear that CVG has a pair of these beauties up for grabs. See, you can trust Trailblazer to deliver the goods every time. But it doesn't stop there: if that wasn't enough, CVG has rustled up a giant bundle of killer Xbox games to give away, like Halo, Project Gotham, and Dead Or Alive 3. What are you waiting for?

7th FUZION FRENZY

COURTESY OF **MICROSOFT**

Grab a takeaway curry, get the booze in, invite your mates around, and then get stuck into some explosive multiplayer action in Fuzion Frenzy. Pucka!

Q. How many manic mini-games are there in Fusion Frenzy?

A. 45 B. 450 C. 4500 D. 45,000,000,000

6th DEAD OR ALIVE 3

COURTESY OF **MICROSOFT**

There are few finer pleasures than watching two busty birds getting physical, and the girls in DOA3 are perhaps the fittest ever to appear in a videogame. Oh, and the brawling action is mint too.

Q. What's the name of the new beret-wearing brute in DOA3?

A. Superman B. He Man C. Rayman D. Bayman

5th ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

COURTESY OF **MICROSOFT**

A graphically gorgeous adventure, riddled with puzzles, kooky characters, fart gags and weirdos.

Q. What are the obedient fur ball creatures in Munch's Oddysee called?

A. Fraggles B. Fuzzles C. Frazzles D. Muggles

4th AMPED

COURTESY OF **MICROSOFT**

It's prettier than a postcard, and the most realistic and enormous snowboarding game ever. And guess what? It could be yours. Sick!

Q. The aim of the game in Amped is to...?

A. Get famous B. Wreck a ski resort C. Compete in the Winter Olympics D. Find Atlantis

3rd PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

COURTESY OF **MICROSOFT**

Ferraris, new Mini Coopers, Mercedes... they're all here for caning around the super-realistic, painstakingly recreated landscapes of New York, London, Tokyo and San Francisco. Race 'em or wreck 'em, it's up to you. Just make sure you're wearing your seatbelt.

Q. How many circuits are there in Project Gotham Racing?

A. 100 B. 200 C. 300 D. 400

2nd HALO

COURTESY OF **MICROSOFT**

This killer shooter will blow your mind: hordes of aliens, massive gunfights, stunning gameplay and visuals to die for. Win it now!

Q. What is the race of zombie-like creatures in Halo called?

A. The Tsunami B. The Flood C. The Cyclone D. The Hurricane

lazer! X

FINISH HERE

XBOX XPLOSION

TO WIN

XBOX

COURTESY OF **MICROSOFT**

The almighty power of Xbox is finally here and we've got two of the monster consoles to give away, thanks to Microsoft. Once you get one of these puppies set up in your living room you'll be the talk of the town, so get your entries in sharpish, people!

Q. Who developed surefire Xbox hit, Halo?

A. Bizarre Creations
B. Bitmap Brothers
C. Blitz Games
D. Bungie

COMPETITION

GO ON- WIN IT

Fill in this coupon, tick the correct answers and send it to:

I Want To Be A CVGillionaire! 244, Computer And Video Games, 30 Cleveland St, London, W1T 4JD

Fusion Frenzy
Tick the correct answer:
A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D. ☐

Dead Or Alive 3
Tick the correct answer:
A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D. ☐

Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee
Tick the correct answer:
A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D. ☐

Amped
Tick the correct answer:
A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D. ☐

Project Gotham Racing
Tick the correct answer:
A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D. ☐

Halo
Tick the correct answer:
A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D. ☐

Xbox Xplosion
Tick the correct answer:
A. ☐ B. ☐ C. ☐ D. ☐

Enter your details below

Name:

Age:

Address:

Postcode:

Email Address:

Terms and conditions: Only entries with all of the questions completed and received before **March 14 2002** will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post, so don't call, eh? No cash alternatives. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The editor's decision is final. And when it comes to deciding, nobody decides like 'Decisive Al'. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.

HUNTER'S BACKSIDE!

WIN!WIN!WIN!

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Developer Top Dumps

THIS MONTH'S DEVELOPER: TONY PORKINS OF GORDON SHINE PRODUCTIONS

TOP DUMP
"Easy. I'd been at Glastonbury for the weekend and not been once. I don't know if you've ever seen the toilets there... Right, so you can imagine how I was feeling. Pretty much fit to burst. I waited until I got home and when I eventually went I felt so happy I cried with joy."
2/10

BOTTOM DUMP:
"A shameful episode, I'm afraid. My therapist has warned me not to reveal too much, but let's just say it took place during a visit to Wicksteed Park. I cried that time, too, but not with joy!"
2/10

WORST-SMELLING:
"Every Saturday night, after a visit to the Tandoori Citadel! Let's just leave it at that! Oh yeh, and the one I didn't flush for a week."
2/10

OUR KID

This month: Our Kid meets Revolver Ocelot

Games too much like real life, say scientists

Distinguishing between the two now impossible, claim boffins

Government watchdogs are calling for a halt to lifelike videogame graphics after extensive tests showed gamers can no longer tell fiction from reality.

In the first test, scientists drove a random sample of PlayStation 2 gamers along the M1 in a Renault Laguna. Next, the same gamers were asked to play Gran Turismo for a period of up to 23 minutes.

And in shock results, just four of the ten gamers were able to tell the difference between their 'real life' motorway jaunt and Gran Turismo. Four became 'mixed up and confused' and two others incorrectly identified the Laguna

Real cars are becoming more videogame-like

Could you tell this scene from a videogame?

driving as a game and Gran Turismo as real, insisting the distance between junctions 20 and 21 might be covered more quickly by switching to the 'drift' steering style.

Head tester Lee Tester said, "We will be recommending developers incorporate a flashing 'this is a game' warning on all games in the future."

In a second test, gamers were asked to go to the bathroom late at night without waking their family, and then to play Metal Gear Solid 2. Just three of the gamers correctly identified 'real' and 'game'. Seven others are being held by police on charges of assault, and possession of an offensive weapon.

Thumb Bandits 'not rude enough'

TV games programme slammed for its 'good language'

TV games expert Iain Lee has been slammed for 'inoffensive and polite language' on TV's Thumb Bandits, while co-presenter Aleks Krotoski has been branded as 'too out yer face'.

Aleks Krotoski: Sheez a kronikli un-kool khi-ka

The broadside came as young, streetwise, ABC 1 gamers delivered their verdict on the late Friday night games review programme.

During the sample episode, savvy teenage early adopters saw presenter Iain Lee swear on just four occasions, only one of which was entirely gratuitous. In the same programme he was inappropriately rude to just two guests, a fall after the previous week's episode, during which he needlessly insulted four guests, calling one "a clueless virgin".

Meanwhile, co-presenter Aleks Krotoski, despite an assymetrical haircut, Transatlantic accent and an oddball spelling of her Christian name, failed to deliver the edgy, opinion-forming content demanded by today's clued-up gamers.

Hip, young gamers called for the return of Games Master, which once featured CVG editor Alex Simmons talking out of his arse.

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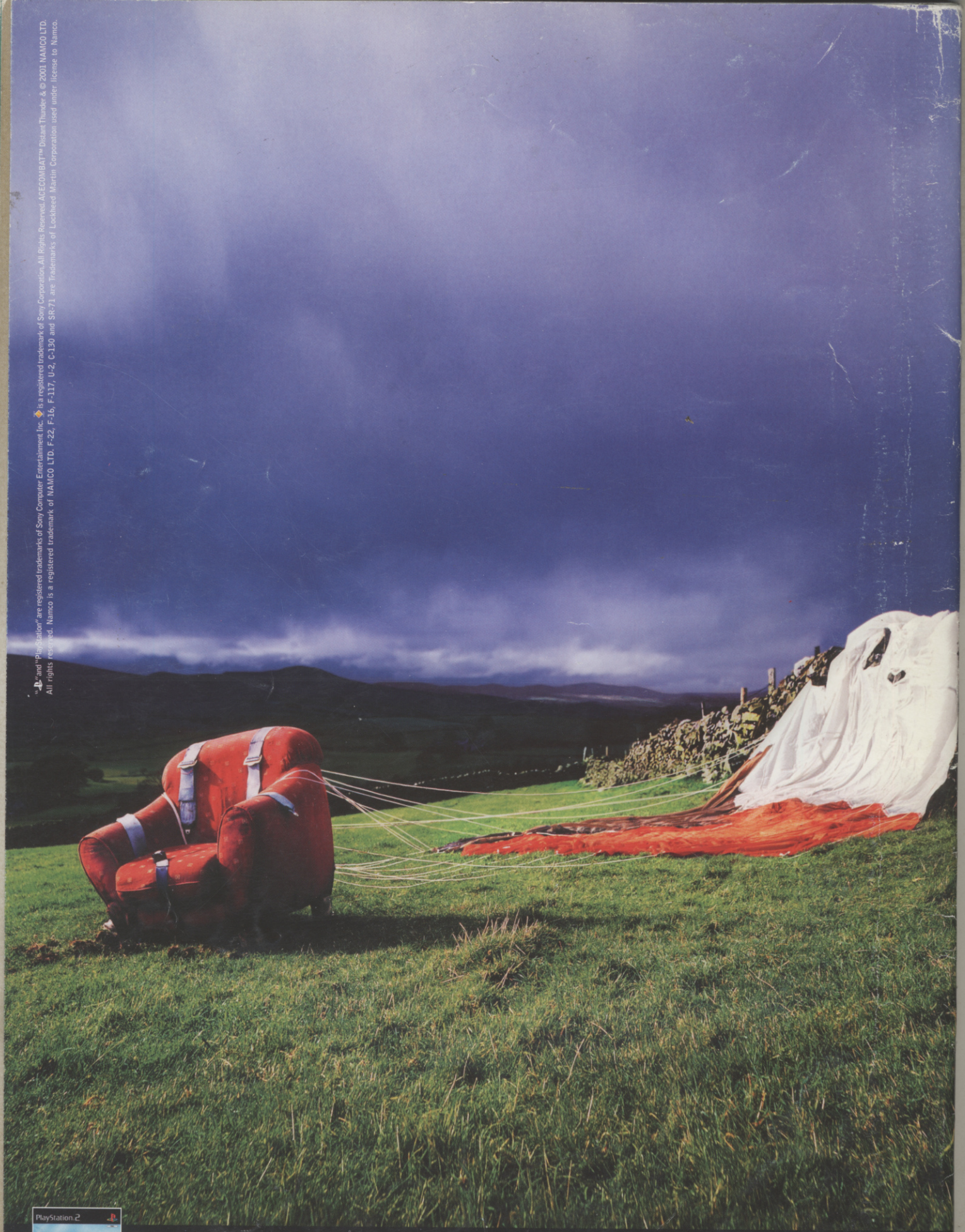

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Three things you should know about aerial combat
1. To see and strike first is everything
2. To see and strike first is everything
3. The enemy knows what you know

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PlayStation 2
THE THIRD PLACE